Tamil TIMES

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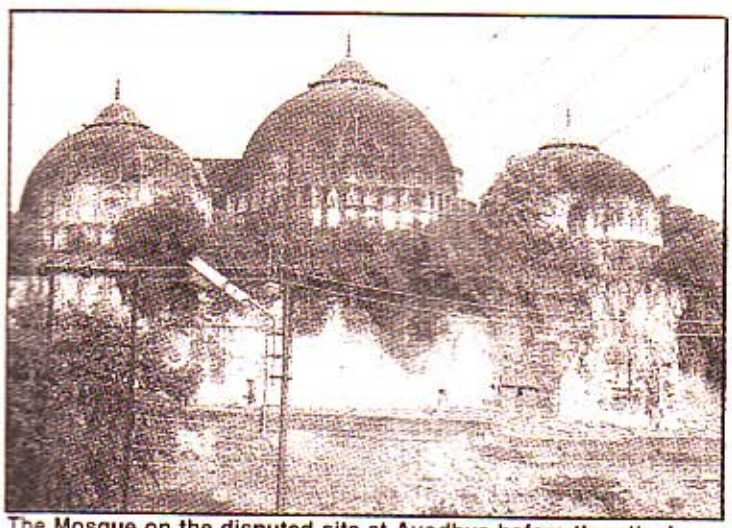
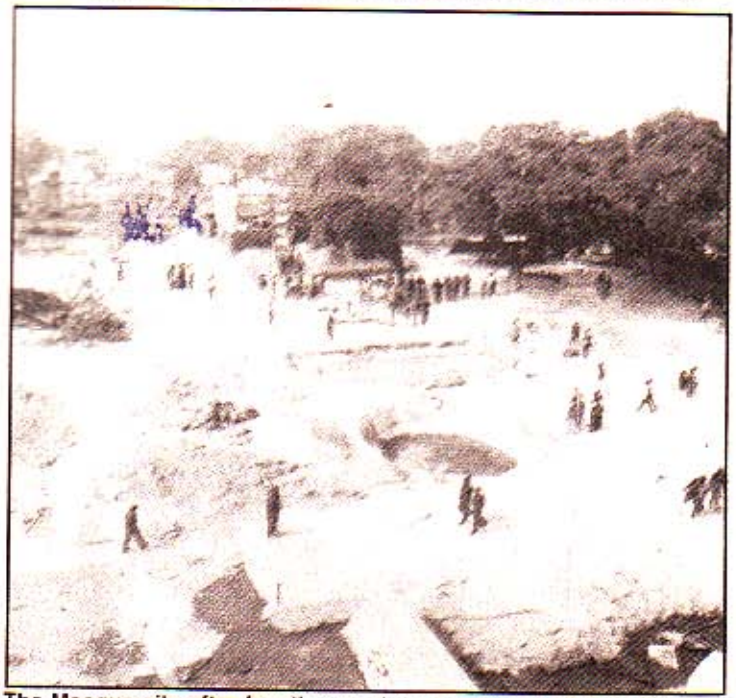
"I do not agree with a word of what you say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it."

– Voltaire

Hindhu Fanatics Bring Shame on Secular India



The Mosque on the disputed site at Ayodhya before the attack



The Mosque site after fanatics went on a rampage of demolition

★ President's Dilemma: War or Peace

★ THE EELAM WAR – ELEVENTH YEAR

★ Select Committee 'Consensus'

★ CWC Quits Select Committee

★ THE TAMIL STRUGGLE IN CRISIS

★ Peace Proposals : A Trojan Horse

★ The Case for a Free Media in Sri Lanka

★ FOR A FEDERAL STRUCTURE

★ Can Secularism Survive in India

★ Fishing in India's Troubled Waters

★ 1045 Soldiers Killed in 1992

★ THE ORPHANS OF WAR

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AN UNWORTHY 'CONSENSUS'

The recently announced so-called consensus by the Parliamentary Select Committee was hailed by some as a major breakthrough primarily because the ruling United National Party and the main opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party had for the first time been parties to this 'consensus'. It was claimed that the 'consensus' was based on the much publicised 'Srinivasan Proposals'.

Hitherto an unknown quantity in Sri Lankan politics, Mr. K. Srinivasan entered parliament as an ENDLF (a Tamil militant group) MP, but the group had disowned him some time ago for his support of President Premadasa during the ill-fated impeachment campaign. Recently Mr. Srinivasan hit the headlines in the Sri Lankan media with his proposals (see page 9), which fundamentally deviated from the traditional position adopted by all other Tamil parties and groups which stood firmly behind the demand that the northern and eastern provinces must continue to remain a merged single territorial unit as envisaged under the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement and given legislative force under the 13th amendment to the island's Constitution. However, the main provision in Mr. Srinivasan's proposals was for the delinking of these two provinces, but as a quid-pro-quo for this delinking, the unitary Sri Lankan constitution was to be converted into a federal one with increased powers for the federal units. The other salient aspects of his proposals included the provision for institutional arrangements for the security of the Muslims and for the maintenance of the ethnic balance of each unit as at the year 1971.

What eventually emerged as the 'consensus' of the Select Committee was a truncated and distorted version of the Srinivasan proposals which in themselves fell far short of what the Tamil parties were asking for. According to the letter from the Committee's Chairman to the Speaker the 'consensus' was 'on the establishment of two separate councils for the North and the East and to treat the North and the East as two distinct provinces and on a scheme of devolution similar to that which obtains in India in the administration of the States'. The reference to 'federalism' was dropped on a proposal by the UNP representative in the Select Committee, Cabinet Minister, Mr. Sahul Hameed and supported by the SLFP. This was done in spite of the fact that these two parties would appear to have assured Mr. Srinivasan that they would support his proposals in their entirety. There was no reference in the 'consensus' to any of the other aspects of the Srinivasan proposals.

One realises the fact that, since the commencement of Eelam War II in June 1990, the 'Muslim Question' has assumed a significant dimension in the present conflict and it will have to be addressed in any eventual solution. It would also appear there is a substantial body of Muslim opinion, particularly in eastern Sri Lanka where the majority of the Muslims reside, which is not in favour of a merged North-East single province. However, by not offering anything substantial by way of increased autonomous powers under a truly federal structure in return for proposing the separation of the north and east as two distinct provinces, the 'consensus' seeks to withdraw even what had already been granted and implemented in pursuance to the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement. In this context, it is not surprising that all Tamil parties, including the Ceylon Workers Congress rejected the 'consensus', and now the CWC has also withdrawn from the Select Committee future proceedings.

The UNP and the SLFP have been playing a cynical game up to now as far as the Select Committee is concerned. They did not even submit their proposals to it like the other political parties did. They took the opportunity of the proposals put forward by a naive Mr. Srinivasan to foist a so-called consensus. There cannot be a genuine consensus without the support of the Tamil parties. If this so-called consensus is not acceptable to the Tamil parties and groups which have given up the armed struggle and which are now represented in parliament, the UNP and SLFP leaderships should realise that they would have no chance of getting the LTTE which is engaged in the ongoing war to even regard it as worthy of consideration.

In spite of the flurry of recent speculation that the government and the LTTE was engaged in some behind the scene negotiations, on Christmas Eve as many as 45 soldiers were killed in a single encounter with the Tigers in northern Sri Lanka, and the army claimed that it had also killed many Tigers. On 2 January even as President Premadasa was engaging in pious platitudes from the elevated pedestal of the Octagon of Sri Dalada Malgawa in Kandy on the occasion of his inauguration about 'the urgent need of the hour is a peaceful solution to the north-east crisis', an estimated forty to fifty innocent Tamil civilians were killed when his security forces launched indiscriminate attacks upon boats carrying passengers from Jaffna to the mainland through the Kilali lagoon. Thus the war and the ensuing death and destruction that have gone for the last several years continue unabated into 1993.

If the President is really serious about bringing an end to the war and to what he describes as the north-east crisis, he can begin by telling his party to take the lead in submitting proposals to the Select Committee on the basis of which there can be a genuine consensus acceptable to Tamil and Muslim opinion rather than attempting to divide and rule in the troubled waters of the Tamil and Muslim communities.

Peace or War – Premadasa's Dilemma

President Premadasa is today unable to come up with a definite plan to tackle the conflict in the north and east of Sri Lanka either militarily or politically. It was widely believed that he would somehow succeed in overcoming the Tamil problem at least temporarily to suit the exigencies of his re-election by talking to the Tigers. This belief is what impelled Colombo's rumour mill to work overtime as the year drew to a close; when many people in the press and in a section of the diplomatic community took it for granted that Mr. Natesan Satyendra had flown from England and was in Colombo to strike a deal with President Premadasa on behalf of the Tigers, and this is denied by well informed sources. Since this rumour hit the city in the wake of intense speculation that the Minister for Higher Education, Mr. A.C.S. Hameed had gone to Paris to hold talks with the LTTE's Lawrence Thilakar, and that a ceasefire for Christmas and New Year was imminent, it quickly acquired a semblance of solemn veracity. However, while Mr. Hameed's presence in London is confirmed, reliable sources deny that he went to Paris as speculated.

However, the rumour mill was given a rude jolt on Christmas Eve when the Tigers massacred forty two regular soldiers between Kovilady and Kokkuthoduvai south of Mullaithivu in northeastern Sri Lanka. The Jaffna press controlled by the LTTE, had given no indication whatsoever that peace was imminent or possible. Yet, the suspicion that Premadasa would ultimately come to a convenient arrangement with the Tigers remained quite strong in Colombo – the *Sunday Times* even going to the extent of publishing a routine Finance Ministry policy document on provincial development, which dealt with the north and east as one province, to make its point that the government might be involved in behind the scene moves to find a settlement. (It is often conveniently forgotten that the north and east have remained merged and have been treated as one administrative unit for all technical and official purposes since 1987).

Premadasa' perfidious intent

Although Premadasa has given a free hand to the armed forces in the prosecution of the war and the enforcement of the harsh embargo on the north since June 1990, the impression that he would betray the Sinhala nation and compromise its interests by talking to the Tigers and giving in to their demands, has been well orchestrated in the South. Hence his every move and pronouncement on the ethnic question is regarded with mistrust and is scrutinized for perfidious intent.

The Sinhala opposition and a section of the 'national' press is ever ready to cry foul at him; that he has sold out the Sinhala cause to the Eelamists. His opponents and many detractors argue that he would be compelled to open negotiations with the Tigers more so because he had to hold Presidential elections early – sometime next year – and a deal with the Tigers could secure him Tamil votes in the north and east in addition to the Sinhala rural vote that he could gather with his much publicised 'two hundred garment factories programme'. He, it was argued, had to hold Presidential elections before the garment factory bubble burst and led to rural disaffection and before the opposition could pull its act together. Therefore, many including some of his own party men could not resist speculation that he might make a gesture of peace to sort out matters temporarily with the Tigers in view of a mid-term poll.

But just two days before New Year Premadasa categorically stated that he had no intention of calling a Presidential election before its due date in December 1994. Addressing a public rally in Rambukkana, he said: 'The main reason why I do not want to go to the polls before the due time, is that the government is keen on utilising its remaining term of two years to complete its programs on the national agenda. There is another major reason, I do not wish to enter the fray when my main rival (Opposition Leader, Mrs. S. Bandaranaike), is reported to be in ill-health. She is also troubled by a rift in her party. Therefore I wish to tell Mrs. Bandaranaike this: 'Do not worry about contesting a Presidential election in the near future. I am prepared to give you two years to get well and to heal the rift in your party. I do not mind her getting the support of those who betrayed the UNP to split the UNP vote'.

Opposition quagmire

Premadasa is patently in a confident mood where it concerns politics in the south. The opposition cannot extricate itself from a quagmire of its own making. The DUNF which showed potential for emerging as an organised and disciplined opposition has been adversely affected in recent times by the defection of a number of key personalities who were extremely close to Gamini Dissanayake. One, Harsha Kumara Navaratne – nephew of Sarvodaya leader Dr. A.T. Aryaratne, the other, Lakshman Hulugalle. The resignation of Mrs. Ronnie de Mel and the return of Ronnie de Mel, the former Finance Minister, who was one of Lalith Athulathmudali's most powerful opponents in the UNP, has further confounded the political fortunes of the fledgling DUNF in the eyes of the southern public.

Gamini and Lalith are mindful of the difficulties involved in making the traditional UNP voter – who is used to marking for the Aliya (elephant) on the ballot paper – change his mindset. The DUNF no doubt has made some inroads into Thondaman's trade union stronghold in the hillcountry. But it is too early to predict whether that will affect the votes Thondaman is expected to deliver at the next Presidential election.

The President's political confidence in handling the situation in the south springs from the fact that he is already on the campaign trails, organising and wooing the rural poor, whereas the opposition, mainly the SLFP and the DUNF, are yet to sort out some fundamentals in their electoral strategies.

Premadasa's problem then, is the LTTE and its refusal to submit or yield to his political legerdemain and military muscle. It is costing him his Bhumi Putra (Son of the Soil) status among the Sinhalese. The more flamboyant features of this campaign have been denounced as tamashas, as unpatriotic profligacy when the Sinhala nation had to be put on a war footing. This was not cause for much concern until Deputy Speaker, Gamini Fonseka decided recently to question what have been portrayed as his party's 'unpatriotic' deeds.

President's quandary

For the first time the President was faced with the alarming and unpleasant prospect of an overarching Sinhala nationalism, irritated by the receding possibility of securing a military victory, permeating the ranks of his own party. Gamini Fonseka had also blamed the government-controlled media for not giving adequate coverage to the war in general and to the predicament of the soldiers at the battle-front in particular. This was

a theme that was earlier taken up by the leaders of the Hela Urumaya and the Organization for the Protection of Sinhala (nation) who had been granted permission by the army commander to tour the frontlines causing dismay in the ruling circles.

Mr. Premadasa could not have been unaware of the fact that some UNP parliamentarians had privately lauded the stand taken by Gamini Fonseka. Although a special broadcast for the soldiers at the battle-front was set up subsequently at Palay, and the Deputy Speaker encouraged to direct his patriotic energies towards mustering support for the war effort in cash and kind, President Premadasa still finds himself in a quandary when he has to address the northeast question. His quandary may be formulated thus: How to be a true Bhumi Putraya and at the same time convince the minorities and the donor countries that he is a secular leader capable of dragging the island towards NIC status? How does he carry on with his campaign and see to it that it gets maximum publicity in the state controlled media while not giving the impression to his Sinhala nationalist audience that he is a true patriot going hammer and tongs at the Tamil separatists?

The quandary determines his behaviour at crucial junctures. The New Year message was typical. 'We are not for military solutions' he declared on the first of January 1993. On the same day, the state controlled press carried a story by the government run news agency Lankapuvath, that the regime was getting down a fleet of the Argentine made Pucaro turbo prop aircraft which were scheduled to arrive on New Year's Eve and Russian made MI-8 military helicopters scheduled to be delivered by end of January to strengthen the cause of a military victory in the north.

With one thousand one hundred and fifty seven soldiers dead and two thousand and four wounded in one year, the President finds the Tigers a tough and unmanageable military proposition. Were he to give up his development oriented political campaign and don the mantle of Dutta Gamini rallying the Sinhala nation behind him to defeat the Tamil threat, he stands to lose the Tamil vote in the northeast and in the hill country, while not securing a total victory over the Tigers to the satisfaction of Sinhala nationalists who are at the very core of the crisis of legitimacy faced by his government.

Hence the pacifist and the militarist are able to thrive under President Premadasa's patronage. Dayan Jayatilleke, who is widely believed to be one of his advisers on the northeast question, argues that talking to the LTTE would be tantamount to 'appeasing genocidal fascist war criminals and committing political suicide'. He further asserts that 'in short it would be immoral and stupid'.

On the other hand Colombo's Deputy Mayor Kaneshalingam cultivates the impression among the Tamils that the government is ever ready to be reasonable with the Tamils in general and the Tigers in particular to alleviate the sufferings of the people in the north and east.

In this interminable game, no one can pause to consider the plight of the war weary Sinhala foot soldier who gets massacred almost daily by the ferocious troops of the Tiger or the battered Tamil civilian who is caught in the relentless crossfire.

It is very clear from what transpired at the Parliamentary Select Committee that the UNP would be only too happy to impose an unacceptably stupid solution on the Tamils, and President Premadasa will not mind endorsing such a solution, if he can be certain that he can win the war in the northeast – totally and also win his re-election.

UNHCR to Launch Relief Effort in Jaffna

Moves are afoot to launch an international sponsored relief effort aimed at feeding and helping the besieged people of the Jaffna peninsula probably early next year. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) engaged in humanitarian work in Sri Lanka has commenced discussions with the Tigers with a view to opening a supply route to send relief convoys to the peninsula, authoritative official sources said yesterday.

Dr. Peter Nicholas, the Senior Protection officer of the UNHCR in Colombo and the UNHCR's Regional Legal Advisor Mr. Bo Schack met senior Tiger leaders in Jaffna on December 9 in a bid to stress the need to open up a route to the peninsula sources said.

The UNHCR has suggested that the Tigers allow the authorities to send supplies through the Pooneryn area using the Sangupiddy ferry presently controlled by the joint army-navy units. Yogiratnam Yogi and Anton Balasingham had therefore demanded the withdrawal of army and navy units from the area prior to the launching of the relief effort through Pooneryn.

Tigers have agreed to support moves to supply Jaffna with food, medicine and other essential items if a representative of the UNHCR or the ICRC supervised the safe passage of the relief convoys at Pooneryn-Sangupiddy 'area'.

The UNHCR sources said that there was a need to launch a decisive relief operation to help the people in the peninsula. The UNHCR once contacted by the Tigers will in turn contact the Sri Lankan Government to seek a safe corridor to relief convoys sources revealed.

Meanwhile the Tigers have informed the UNHCR that they oppose the repatriation of Tamils from India as the security situation was not suitable for that. However, UNHCR, responsible for looking after those returning from India had indicated that the repatriates were coming back willingly.

This year alone the UNHCR had helped 29,000 Tamils who decided to come back. Another 6,000 are expected in early next year sources said.

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1045 Soldiers Killed in 1992

The army death toll this year rose to 1045 on 24.12.92 evening when 42 regular soldiers including two junior officers were killed at Kovil Point and Kokkuthuduwai in the Welioya region, a military spokesman said.

The officers were identified as Lieutenant Gunatilleke and Second Lieutenant Perera of the sixth battalion of the Ceylon Light Infantry (CLI) regiment.

Military sources said the Tigers numbering over 250 had launched simultaneous attacks on route clearing parties from Kovil Point and Kokkuthuduwai detachments at about 4.45pm while engaging both camps successfully preventing the reinforcements from moving in quickly to aid the troops under attack.

The attackers had removed nearly all weapons, ammunition, communication equipment and grenades belonging to the dead men. However over a dozen soldiers had escaped with injuries, sources said.

A Joint Operations Command spokesman said 17 Tigers had been confirmed killed in the army fire. The Tiger dead included Major Senkolan and Captain Killi, he said. The JOC believes the number of Tiger casualties, both killed and wounded could be nearly 40.

Analysts consider the attack as one of four main attacks on the Army last year. The killings of 52 soldiers at Katupotha, seizure of the armoury of the Koddaikadu camp after killing 13 soldiers, overrunning of the Iddikadu defence killing 47 soldiers were the three major incidents prior to this debacle.

LSSP-CP Head for Merger

Amidst wild speculation that the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Communist Party of Sri Lanka will soon melt into one party, Mr. Batty Weerakoon, Politbureau member of the LSSP said that those speculations were not to be taken seriously.

'It is however true that we, the LSSP and the CP are working very closely but it did not mean we will become one', Mr. Weerakoon stressed.

'Such a thing is an evolutionary process', he said adding that it was also very complex.

Mr. Weerakoon stressed that the LSSP and the CP had many common interests and therefore the two parties would continue to work closely in the future towards ousting the UNP regime. Both parties would also join hands as evident at present with other Opposition forces and parties to achieve this target, he added.

General Secretary of the CP K.P. Silva said that he could not rule out the possibility of a merger of the LSSP and the CP.

He also said that there were many common objectives of both parties and the two parties were working towards achieving these objectives.

Mr. Silva said both the LSSP and the CP were working with the objective of being 'united' in the future. He saw no barriers for such merger. 'However it is to be seen', Mr Silva added.

Asked whether the LSSP and the CP working 'closely' would isolate the two parties from the rest of the Joint Opposition, Mr. Silva said the links the LSSP and the CP had forged with other Opposition Parties would continue to be the same.

Many members of the CP and the LSSP believe that the two parties are heading for a merger.

Tigers Hold Their Own GCE Examination in Jaffna

The Tigers conducted their own G.C.E. (O/L) exam in the north this month. Those who qualify would be given precedence in jobs in the LTTE's administrative service over people with the usual O/L and A/L qualification, said sources in Jaffna.

The Tigers had commissioned a group of retired teachers and scholars under the supervision of a senior Tamil historian to prepare the syllabus early this year. The commission also prepared a school text which is now compulsory reading for school children in the north.

The O/L exam was held, said the sources, to devise a method for recruiting people with 'the right educational outlook' for the expanding administrative structure of the Tigers in the North.

Meanwhile, engineers, technicians, supervisors, accountants, agricultural officers, clerks etc., have already been recruited into this service. The salaries offered by the LTTE's administrative service are high for those with specialist knowledge in technical and scientific fields, said the sources. The manpower requirement has been mainly necessitated by the travel permit system and the minor reconstruction and public maintenance programme of the Tigers.

ROOT, the research and development wing of the LTTE led by Ravi has also launched a recruitment drive to expand its cadre of researchers. The computerisation of the permit system and opening dossiers for intelligence clearance has also created a need for trained personnel. Grade ten students in the north will henceforth be required to sit for the new O.L. in addition to the government exam.

Population of 1.7 Million in N-E Dwindled to 900,000

More than 100,000 people in the northern Jaffna peninsula have lost their jobs due to the civil war and that region has become a non-contributor to Sri Lanka's economy, a northern-based economist says.

'More and more we are going down the depths of despair and the fact that Jaffna does not mean anything, economically, to the government has further delayed the search for a solution to the ethnic question,' said Dr. W. Nithianandan, a lecturer at the University of Jaffna.

Speaking at a Colombo discussion on the 'economics of the ethnic question', Dr. Nithianandan said the Central Bank report last year was inaccurate in noting that the GDP growth picture was one of that happening across the country.

'The impression is created that there is growth in the north and east too. That is not so, particularly in Jaffna,' he said.

He said spiralling defence spending had become a permanent feature in the economy including the high level of recruitment to the police and armed forces. The monies available for defence is unavailable for other productive areas.

'Sri Lanka does not have a defence industry where there is employment and people are dependant on it. Defence is unproductive and other industries have had to bear the burdens of this spending.'

He said the major impact of high defence spending would be felt because of lost opportunities in other sectors that could have used this money for investment purposes.

He said in the north and the east, agriculture was the dominant occupation of the people. The 306,650 hec-

tares of paddy cultivated in the pre-1983 period had now dwindled to 49 percent of that acreage that is being cultivated.

The net loss was phenomenol. In Jaffna, 54,275 people lost employment in the paddy sector after the war broke out because of the fuel ban, marketing problems and the denial of marketing from the south led to excess supplies.

Banana production, once in the region of 600 metric tonnes, had been abandoned.

About 53 factories have been destroyed in aerial bombing and machines at two cement factories at KKS had been damaged. About 40,000 people in industry had lost their jobs.

In the fishing industry, the catch of 104,300 metric tonnes had fallen to 60,100 tonnes by 1989 and was now a mere trickle.

Jaffna which once received 3.4 million litres of petrol, 6.9 million litres of diesel and 4.6 million litres of kerosene was now getting only kerosene because of the fuel ban.

The kerosene quantities was also about 10 percent of what was received earlier, Dr. Nithianandan said.

'Life is not only unpleasant but impossible under these conditions,' he said.

He said the people were suffering from an economic embargo because of the government's failure to distinguish between the enemy and the public.

Dr. Nithianandan said the population of the north-east had dwindled to 900,000 from 1.7 million in 1987. Out of this about 50,000 had been either killed or gone missing in the war while the others had left the region.

He said in the west there were 300,000 Tamils, 200,000 in India and the balance 350,000 were in refugee camps across the island and staying with relatives here.

Dr. Nithianandan said it was to the credit of the people of Jaffna that those who were unable to get out had withstood the onslaught in the north and were surviving.

The functioning of the bureaucracy – education, health, government offices, etc. – in the difficult conditions was commendable, he said.

He said a major portion of the 300,000 in the west were sending money to their relatives back home who were living on this in the absence of suitable employment.

Australian Envoy Hopes for Early Ethnic Solution

Australian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, Howard Debenham hoped that Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, which has eluded a lasting solution for a long time, would be resolved and peace would be restored through a negotiating process soon so that all communities in the country could live in harmony as in the past.

Peaceful resolution of the crisis on the basis of a solution acceptable to all communities is a pre-requisite for the overall development of Sri Lanka and is an urgent need of the hour, he said.

Mr. Debenham made these remarks when addressing a meeting of the Muslim Information Centre (MIC) recently on the Australia-Asia Cooperation.

The meeting, attended by a large number of Muslim leaders and leading Muslim personalities, was chaired by Sir Abdul W.M. Ameer, Chairman of MIC.

Mr. Debenham said that Australia and Sri Lanka enjoyed an extremely warm and close relationship and this relationship is multi-faceted. The presence of a vast number of Sri Lankans in Australia further consolidated these ties from ethno-cultural and people-to-people levels. There is no discrimination against the Sri Lankan community in whatsoever manner and they enjoyed all freedom available in a free and multi-cultural society.

'Trade and cultural ties between the two countries have been steadily growing and expanding in the recent past, apart from mutual political understanding in global fora,' High Commissioner Debenham said.

He also gave a vivid description of the carnage of Muslim civilians in the Medirigiya area of the Polonnaruwa District in October and expressed his anguish and dismay over the spill of innocent civilian blood.

Chairman Sir Abdul Ameer, in his speech, expressed the sincere thanks and profound gratitude of the Muslim Community to the Australian High Commissioner for the swiftness and promptitude he showed in rushing to the scene of the tragedy in Polonnaruwa.

Thanks to his on-the-spot situation report, the Australian government identified the LTTE for the inhuman attack on the Polonnaruwa Muslims and, thereby, Australia became the first government in the industrialised world to denounce the LTTE for the anti-civilian violence. 'The Australian stand was a turning point in the international attitude towards civilians suffering at the hands of the armed militants,' Sir Ameer pointed out.

IMF-Govt. Agree on Tough Economic Reforms

The government has agreed to review alternative methods to finance health care and education in the country between 1992 and 1993 as part of a series of reforms agreed with the International Monetary Fund to draw the balance instalments of an Enhanced Structural Adjustment Fund negotiated in October 1991.

Sri Lanka has already drawn two instalments each about US $75 million of this massive facility of US $450 million spread over a three-year period.

According to a policy framework paper (1992-95) in this regard prepared by the government in collaboration with the staffs of the IMF and the World Bank, in the education sector reforms will include plans to 'enhance cost recovery through user fees and further develop private education,' while in the field of health it will explore 'alternative ways of financing care through insurance systems and fees.'

Under these reforms the authorities have undertaken to restructure the National Savings Bank with the objective of making it a viable commercial institution. In the case of the People's Bank and the Bank of Ceylon the agreements are to re-capitalise them with long-term government securities and transfer their bad and doubtful debts to independent collection agencies.

Among the other major reforms the government has agreed to implement are: Deregulation of bus fares, reduce beneficiaries in food stamps programme to one million programme and augment benefits, convert the Railways Department into an independent corporate authority (1992/93), permit all foreign investors access to domestic financial markets, gradually replace tax holidays and special incentives with lower overall tax rate system, divest capital equipment of the retail outlets and subsidiaries of Ceylon Petroleum Corporation, privatise commercial functions of Mahaweli Authority, take steps to liberalise imports of rice and imports and prices of wheat and flour, and remove discretionary tariffs awarded on an ad hoc basis.

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The Select Committee 'Consensus'

Five parliamentary parties are supporting the establishment of two separate units of devolution for the North and the East, Mr. Mangala Moonesinghe, Chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee for resolving the ethnic issue reported to Speaker M.H. Mohamed on 16 December 1992.

The five parties are the UNP, SLFP, SLMC, CP and, the LSSP.

These parties have also reached agreement on the establishment of two separate Councils for the North and the East and to treat the North and the East as two distinct provinces and on a scheme of devolution similar to that which obtains in India in the administration of the States.

Two members Messrs. K. Srinivasan, MP for the Jaffna district and Mr. Basheer Segudawood, MP for the Batticaloa district, also supported these conclusions.

The Speaker, Mr. M.H. Mohamed read out Mr. Mangala Moonesinghe's letter, at the conclusion of the Budget debate on 16 December.

The following is the text of the letter:

Mr. Speaker,

'I write this letter to keep you and Parliament informed of the progress made so far by the Select Committee which was appointed by Parliament to find a solution to the North-East problem.

'The Committee has explored all avenues to find a solution that is acceptable to all parties concerned. Meanwhile, I am pleased to report to you, Mr. Speaker, that the Members of the Committee representing the UNP, the SLFP, the SLMC, CP and the LSSP have reached agreement on the establishment of two separate councils for the North and the East and to treat the North and the East as two distinct provinces and on a scheme of devolution similar to that which obtains in India in the administration of the States.

'Further, two Members, Mr. K. Srinivasan, MP for the Jaffna district and Mr. Basheer Segudawood, MP for the Batticaloa district, supported these conclusions.

'The MEP's representative supported the de-merger of the North and the East.

'The two members representing the six Tamil political parties and the members representing the CWC, did not agree with the above conclusions.

'I propose to submit the Report in January, 1993. Meanwhile, I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that this committee will continue its efforts in accordance with the mandate given by Parliament'.

CWC Rejects 'Consensus' and Opts Out of PSC

Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) President S. Thondaman announced that his party had decided to dissociate itself from the Select Committee of Parliament deliberating on the North-East issue.

'I have to state with an agonising sense of frustration that the efforts of the CWC to forge a viable settlement of the ethnic problem have failed', the CWC leader stated in a letter written to Mr. Mangala Moonesinghe, Chairman, Parliamentary Select Committee.

Mr. Thondaman in his letter copies of which were released to the press added: 'May I take this opportunity to convey to you personally my thanks for all the courtesies that were extended. I also express my appreciation of the spirit of friendliness in which the discussions of the Select Committee were conducted'.

The following is the text of the statement issued by CWC leader S. Thondaman on the stance of the CWC on the 'consensus proposals' of the Select Committee of Parliament.

'A deteriorating environment of ethnic relations which was tearing the Shri Lankan polity apart occasioned the setting up of the Select Committee of Parliament. Evolving a political strategy to prevent the disintegration of the nation, preventing killings and achieving peace through a devolution of power were the prime tasks cast upon the Select Committee.

The Ceylon Workers Congress mapped out its strategy in detail and placed its proposals before the Select

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The 'Srinivasan Proposals'

The nine points in the peace formula are:

1. The unitary nature of the Sri Lankan Constitution be converted into a federal one. Provided, however, that subject to the undertaking by the parties to the Select Committee that they shall not canvas and/or participate, the question whether Sri Lanka should have a federal constitution or not may be put to the determination of the people of Sri Lanka through the democratic mechanism of a referendum.

2. The Northern and the Eastern Provinces shall each be treated as a distinct unit of devolution.

3. That the maximum powers as agreed upon be devolved to each such unit.

4. That a boundary commission be appointed to demarcate ethnic oriented grass root institutions of power with maximum authority.

5. Within the area of jurisdiction of each such grass root institution, as far as possible people of the same ethnic community together with their respective residential, agricultural and pastural land holdings be brought.

6. Special institutional arrangements be made for the security of the Muslims of each unit.

7. A land commission to distribute unalienated state lands within each unit among the different communities living in each district of the said unit, in keeping with its demographic proportion.

8. The ethnic balance of each unit should be maintained as at the year 1971 without anyway displacing any Sinhalese settlement that has already taken place.

9. In working out the land distribution, it must be ensured that where ever communities had already been displaced in the past, they be restored to possession of their original land holdings.

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Committee for its consideration. Devolution in a real sense to an unbifurcated North-East Province constituted the cornerstone of the proposals. Autonomy for the Muslims within the ambit of a single Provincial Council along with safeguards for the Sinhalese minority were cardinal elements in the CWC proposals. The seven Tamil parties buttressed these four points.

The proposals for devolution embraced the crucial concerns regarding land, law and order, financial arrangements, administration of justice and an enlarged list of subjects and functions for the Provincial Councils. The proposals outlined in detail, amplified and elucidated over a period of one year at the sittings of the select committee have failed to engage its attention.

It is utterly disconcerting to note that the select committee couldn't perceive the bearing these issues had on the resolution of the ethnic conflict. With total unconcern for the content of devolution, energies were dissipated on the receptacle to receive the content.

Bifurcation of the receptacle became the overweening consideration of the committee. It was known that a demerger would expose the hollowness of the solution proferred in all its nakedness. To conceal the void, the mirage of federalism was invoked. I have stated forthrightly that a federal arrangement could best safeguard the interest of the minorities provided the government and the opposition, would jointly frame and adopt a federal constitution. With this insistence by the CWC even the term federal has been dropped by the select committee.

Now we have the disturbing spectacle of the select committee proposing neither a merged province nor a federal set up. The Indian model is now being advanced. The Indian arrangement of power-sharing is quasi-federal. This system has power weighted towards the centre. The threat of dissolution hangs ominously over the State Assembly.

The State Government is under threat of disappearance. This is not the model on which the Tamils would ever pitch their sights. The struggles the states of India are engaged in, bespeak the revolt against poverty of power in the states and a domineering control from the centre.

This emasculated system cannot attract the attention of the Tamils, much less win their allegiance. A wrong model cannot rectify a malady. It compounds the problem. Hence the CWC's stance of repudiation of the select committee proposals.

It is widely known that there are as many federal constitutions as there are federations. No two federal constitutions are alike. The urge to prevent separation or conversely the countervailing predilection for unity determines the degree of autonomy embodied in a federal constitution.

It is therefore mandatory for the proponents of a federal idea to spell out in precise terms the parameters of their concept. Though federalism has been discussed for over four decades, even the rudimentary features of federalism have not been forthcoming in the proposal for a federal set up.

The land question is crucial to the people of the north-east. Vesting of the land in the provincial authority of the north-east has been foundational in their political thinking.

On the issue of vesting state land in the provincial council, the All Party Conference arrived at a matrix of eight parties for, two against and six abstentions in August 1990. In January 1992, the select committee had a matrix of four parties for, no party against and eight abstentions. This was the position when devolution was under consideration.

But it was not even entertained when the issue was taken up in December 1992 after the federal formula was advanced in November 1992. To the politically conscious, the signal is clear. It becomes incumbent on the part of the CWC to point out that the proposal for an impotent and bifurcated north-east province cannot resolve the tangled web of ethnic relations.

The federal formula put forward by the five political parties signifies some advance on the political thinking in Shri Lanka. It is however unfortunate that this formula that is being proferred is being vitiated by the bifurcation of the federating unit.

The CWC stands by its stance towards the concept paper that "Tamil opinion has expressed itself unequivocally in favour of an unbifurcated north-east province. This is the starting point for a consideration of any proposal to resolve the ethnic problem. Not to accept this political imperative is to set one's face against peace".

The CWC has never retracted from the position of an unbifurcated north-east province. A merged north-east has been a political reality for five years. It has not precipitated separation. It may therefore be allowed to continue for a specified time frame of five to ten years and the government of the north-east province could take a decision at a later date.

The CWC considered it prudent that the select committee should build on the achievements recorded in the recent past. A measure of devolution extended through the thirteenth amendment to a merged north-east province was the logical starting point for the select committee to commence its work.

The select committee instead eschewed the path of sagacity to demerge the north-east which has been a reality for five years. The Indo-Lanka Accord has been set aside cavalier fashion. The merger has been violated. No meaningful scheme of devolution has been seriously considered much less worked out.

A committee that was called upon to take the peace process forward has deprived the people of the north-east even of what was available to them. If an agreement entered into by two countries is jettisoned in this manner, the Tamils cannot repose any faith in negotiations, agreements or pacts. The totality of the Tamils setting their face against moderation and turning to a position of intransigence therefore becomes inescapable.

The CWC has at all times pledged itself for a united Shri Lanka. My political philosophy has been to work for the betterment of all people in the whole of Shri Lanka. When the Tamil United Front was formed, the CWC was one of the component units along with the Federal Party and the Tamil Congress.

However when the Vaddukkoddai Resolution called for a separate State of Eelam, the CWC dissociated itself from the Tamil United Front and later the Tamil United Liberation Front.

My association with the destiny of the Tamils is longstanding. It has been my consistent endeavour to evolve a solution within the set up of a single polity. Recognising, appreciating and conceding the demand for autonomy as a viable means of fulfilling the expectations of Tamils is a singular option to preserve the unity of the country. To me this appears self-evident.

A positive approach to resolve the Tamil problem would need a realistic understanding of the character of the Tamils and their aspirations. May I reiterate certain truths which to us seem axiomatic.

The Tamils, taking as they do a pride about their language and culture, history and heritage can never be subjugated. Nor can they be assimilated. They will never accept a *modus vivendi* otherwise than as equals in

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The Eelam War : Eleventh Year

by Shamindra Ferdinando

The war in 1992 was marked by two major features. First, a campaign of highly successful, daring and spectacular Tiger strikes against selected targets both in the north-east region and Colombo.

The second was the increased hostility among some senior security forces and defence officials. 1992 was the second successive year in which internal problems in the security forces affected the war strategy, analysts claim.

The conflict this year (1992) has generated fears and concern that the Tigers were slowly but steadily moving to gain the upper hand in the war now into its 11th year.

Looking to the future, this country will definitely experience a significant growth in terrorist activities, analysts point out. Analysis of the strategies and capabilities of the government and the Tigers clearly suggest that whatever happens the war is set to continue for a long time.

'For the Tigers there is no set time table to achieve Eelam', one source said. By pursuing a strategy of combined military, psychological, economic, 'political' and propaganda campaigns the Tigers were most likely to secure targets set for next year (1993). They were able to achieve what they wanted this year (1992) and apparently there is no one to prevent them from achieving objectives next year (1993) according to observers.

But the security forces still have a little bit of time to adopt a result oriented strategy to regain the initiative from the battle hardened Tigers, they said. However time is running out, they point out.

Sri Lanka in 1992 experienced up to three dozens of major Tiger attacks and operations including the successful infiltration of the defences in the city. 'The number of "incidents" rose this year (1992) as a result of Tigers making a determined bid to put pressure on the government", an authoritative military source said recently.

A particular concern was the surge in Tiger activity in Colombo, he added. And at the same time these attacks coupled with military and political miscalculations by the 'authorities' had contributed to a deteriorating security situation.

As this year (1992) draws to its close the security situation remains precarious with no indications of any decisive military offensives aimed at seeking the total destruction of the Tigers.

The year 1992 started badly for the security forces. The restoration of the Joint Operations Command (JOC) on November 18 previous year and the appointment of General Hamilton Wanasinghe as the commanding officer of the JOC with powers over the three service commanders and the IGP resulted in unwanted problems.

The November changes generated hostility, among senior military and defence officials. Senior officers opposed the desire of the government to place the JOC in charge of the anti-Tiger drive. And as a result of their protests the government on March 26 changed the command and control structure of the security forces and placed the operations under the direct command of the three service chiefs and the IGP.

But the service commanders and the IGP were able to run the government's war machine only for seven months.

Losses suffered by the Army (1992)	
Jan.	**86**
Feb.	**71**
March	**135**
April	**40**
May	**97**
June	**78**
July	**167**
August	**57**
September	**97**
October	**62**
November	**80**
December (upto 23rd)	**34**
Total	**1003**

Wounded (from June 11 – third week Aug) **7621** including **303** officers.

When compared with Army losses the other services and the police had not suffered much.

On October 1, President R. Premadasa in an unexpected move re-appointed General Hamilton Wanasinghe as the supreme officer in charge of all security operations, and placed the service commanders and the IGP under his command.

These on and off changes in the command and control structure of the security forces did not help the government to achieve anything this year (1992) except generating hostility and enmity among officers, responsible for conducting the war. Analysts believe the clear signs of differences among the officers and the defence officials had affected the war against the Tigers this year (1992).

With only four more days for the new year, there was no apparent cooperation between the sections of the 'defence establishment' they said.

This year (1992) started with a disaster for the security forces. While senior officers and defence officials were engaged in a battle in Colombo to gain control of the government's war machine an explosion took place in China Bay in the Trincomalee district. Considered as the biggest and the most damaging explosion in the Eelam war the January 21 explosion claimed the lives of 25 airmen and wounded 77 others.

Upto a dozen aircraft and helicopters were either damaged or destroyed. A massive stock of explosives were destroyed in the explosion. That was probably the first time the use of outdated explosives caused death and destruction and temporarily halted the manufacture of various types of explosive devices to attack Tigers in the north.

About two months later the government placed the service commanders and the IGP in command of the offensive against the Tigers. They were quick to launch some limited scale and highly successful operations against the Tigers in the region.

One of the key accomplishments of them was the disruption of Tiger and civilian traffic from the mainland to the peninsula and the other way.

Combined air-sea-land operations helped the government to take control of Ooriyan and Kombadi, two entry points to the peninsula, Sangupiddy ferry, small islands west of the peninsula, Elephant Pass, a thin ribbon of causeway which links the mainland with the peninsula and to a certain extent the Jaffna lagoon.

Later a naval radar station was established at Nagathevanthurai to halt Tiger controlled boat traffic across the lagoon. When the security forces were slowly gaining on the Tigers the unexpected happen.

The destruction of a Chinese transport plane on a bombing mission over Jaffna came just as the military balance was shifting in the Army's favour particularly in the northern theatre of operations. Nineteen men, including six officers, went down with the plane, a 100 seater used extensively to supply troops in the front and bomb Tiger positions.

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Analysts claimed that the explosion may have been caused by the use of outdated explosives to manufacture explosive devices.

Like the China Bay explosion, the destruction of the aircraft in the air was a first in the Eelam war.

Sri Lanka has never lost an aircraft by an accidental explosion. The July 6 destruction of the aircraft prompted the authorities to halt the use of locally manufactured devices against the Tigers.

Tragedies in China Bay and Jaffna forced the authorities to seek ways and means to 'destroy' massive stocks of outdated explosives stored in various places.

Since then at least one security forces officer had died early last December and three wounded while trying to dismantle locally manufactured explosive devices.

The air disaster was followed by the assault on the Katupotha army detachment on July 11. Tigers reinforced with commando units overcame opposition to wipe out the detachment killing 52 soldiers and removing all weapons, ammunition, and communication sets before the nearby detachments could respond effectively. The camp was burnt to the ground.

That was the most damaging attack on the Army after Lieutenant General Cecil Waidyaratne took control over the 77,000 strong force in November previous year.

The losses at Katupotha gave ammunition to those who were waiting to 'shoot down' Waidyaratne.

Bolstered by the success at Katupotha the Tigers launched a series of attacks on the Army and especially targetted the Forward Defence Lines (FDLs) resulting in heavy casualties among the troops.

Still the Army maintained pressure on the Tigers.

But everything changed the next month. The August 8 Araly point explosion wiped out the northern command just 48 hours before the launching of Operation Final Count Down aimed at challenging Tiger supremacy in the Jaffna peninsula. Sri Lanka lost her most popular soldier 52-year-old Denzil Kobbekaduwa and veteran serviceman Wijaya Wimalaratne.

Eight others died including chief of naval operations in the north Commodore Mohan Jayamaha and three Colonels.

Controversy surrounds their deaths – the biggest single setback suffered by the security forces this year (1992). Both the government and the opposition had tried to use the deaths of these men for political purposes. They have accused each other of seeking political gains by misleading Mrs. Lali Kobbekaduwa, the wife of the slain General. Many consider the Araly point deaths as the most important and decisive incident of this year (1992) which has completely changed the situation in favour of the Tigers.

On August 29 seaborne Tigers seized a 30 feet long inshore patrol craft off Mandathivu island, where the Navy maintains a base for operations against the Sea Tigers. The seizure of the armed patrol craft came just days after the government proudly announced the capture of Madagal, a key Sea Tiger base. (That was the first time the Tigers were successful in capturing a patrol craft).

The so-called capture of Madagal was the only limited scale operation conducted in the northern theatre of operations after the Araly point deaths. Upto this month there have been no major security forces offensives in that particular region.

But the Tigers have been extremely busy attacking the forces. Then in the next month, September, the Tigers sought the destabilisation of Colombo.

On September 23 SP A. Theophilus was gunned down in Colombo. The SP who had lost a son at the hands of the Tigers six years ago in Batticaloa was ruthlessly shot dead as his daughter watched on.

That was the beginning of a step up of military campaigns in the north and Colombo.

On October 1 seaborne Tigers and Sea Tiger units launched one of the most successful attacks this year (1992). Thirteen soldiers died and upto two dozens wounded when Tigers stormed the Koddaikadu Army camp and removed arms, ammunition, equipment and the commanding officer's vehicle worth over Rs. 50 million (50,000,000). The Army had never lost 'things' worth so many millions in a single attack.

A week after the Koddaikadu debacle President Premadasa appointed General Hamilton Wanasinghe as the officer in charge of the security forces drive against the Tigers. The service chiefs and the IGP were again placed under the JOC authority.

However, the Tigers were not interested in 'internal politics' of the government high command. They continued to carry out their campaign. On October 15 upto 200 Muslims and a dozen Sinhalese died in the Medirigiriya police area, well within the north central province.

Seventeen policemen and soldiers died defending the civilians.

Although the Tigers were able to prove their ability and capability to infiltrate government defence at will by wiping out the Muslims, the British government and other nations did not like the massacre.

Some believe the British decision to lift the ban on arms sales to Colombo was prompted by the ruthless Tiger massacre of the Muslims. The Australian government too openly condemned the killings.

In the same month 177 home guards fled service when ordered to move into operational areas as part of security measures to guard civilians against Tiger attacks. They were from the Matale police division alone. There were many such cases beginning early August.

Over 1000 soldiers fled the Army after the Araly point blast. Then the first suicidal attack against a person in Sri Lanka was carried out by the Tigers on November 15. The Navy Commander Admiral Clancy Fernando and three other officers were blown to death in a suicidal attack by Tigers in front of Army Headquarters.

As the government tried to prevent any more attacks in the City Tigers made an attempt to assassinate Trade Minister, A.R. Munsoor on the day he was to be chief guest at the EXPO '92. In a separate incident a few days later a young Tiger cornered by policemen from the Crime Detection Bureau (CDB) committed suicide by exploding a hand grenade in Minister Nanda's residence.

While troops were engaged in protecting the City from a possible Tiger assault Tigers struck at Iddikadu in the peninsula killing 47 soldiers including the commanding officer and his deputy in charge of the defences at that particular sector. They died on November 24.

This year too (1992), there were no changes in the front. The troops and policemen continued to face problems without communication sets, good food, insufficient number of uniforms, transport problems and medical care.

Some attempts have been made to correct the situation after repeated appeals from the security forces.

Many think the politicians were drinking wine while 'preaching water' to the people and the forces who number upto 186,000 men.

Both sides have suffered heavy casualties. Despite problems the government has acquired tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, 130 mm medium

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The Challenge of Transcending Narrow Nationalism and Militarism

Tamil People's Struggle in Crisis

by N. Shanmugaratnam[1]

Is the nationalism of the oppressed always progressive? The answer would be an unqualified yes according to the simple axiom that the nationalism of the oppressed is an ideology of resistance and an inevitable response to the reactionary great nation chauvinism of the oppressor state. Then today's Tamil nationalism as represented by the LTTE should be considered progressive and even revolutionary. For there is no doubt that the LTTE is engaged in an armed struggle against a chauvinist authoritarian state with the aim of establishing an 'independent state of Thamil Eelam'. However, a more critical view of the politico-military developments of the post-July 1983 period would show that being anti-state may be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for a movement to be regarded as progressive. History is replete with instances in which movements representing the oppressed imitate the oppressor in many ways. For instance, in choosing their myths and symbols, re-construction of history, shaping ideologies and organs of social and political control, and in dealing with conflicts within and between movements. Nationalism is not only an inclusive but an exclusive ideology. In defining and consolidating the identity of a particular oppressed *ethnie* on a territorial basis, the leading nationalist ideologues may deliberately exclude other groups that have been peacefully coexisting with that *ethnie* for centuries.

Thus it is conceivable that a nationalist ideology that is popular among an oppressed people can be reactionary like the nationalism of the oppressor. Thamil Eelam nationalism has become such a reactionary ideology. The chronicle of ethnic pogroms committed by Tamil militants from the Anuradhapura massacre of 1985 to the more recent Medirigiriya killings and the expulsion of the Muslim people from their traditional homelands in the North-East are among the most dangerous manifestations of a militarist Thamil Eelam chauvinism. The ideology that dominates the Tamil people's struggle today is a powerful mix of narrow Tamil nationalism and militarism. It would be a fallacy to assume that this ideological mix is a monopoly of the LTTE although they are its most extreme exponents at present. In the past, we have seen concrete manifestations of militarism and Tamil chauvinism in the actions of some other groups. By militarism of the LTTE I do not mean anything like a Tamil martial tradition althouth the latter has become a part of the ideological core of Tamil ethnicity. In this instance, I use the term militarism in its generally known sense to denote the practice that seeks military solutions to political issues and conflicts. In today's Sri Lanka, militarism has become a common property of the state and the violent anti-state forces. In the North-East, it has become a political practice that negates the radical politics of liberation by using organised terror on unarmed people and on rival groups which may be armed to assert the authority of a particular organisation. In such a situation militarism is organised and sustained terrorism, and an ideology too. While Tamil militarism is a phenomenon originating in the 1980s, narrow Tamil nationalism has a longer history.

The armed struggle in the North-East has been going on for nine years (almost a decade, one may say), long enough to reveal the nature of the political forces at work and to project likely future scenarios based on their dynamics. The LTTE has emerged as the *de facto* state in the areas under its control. Its power apparatus is made of instruments of coercive repression and terrorism as well as ideological hegemony in ways that are characteristic of fascism. It can not be denied that the LTTE enjoys the support and admiration of a section of the Tamil population in the North-East. It is equally undeniable that another section, which appears to be growing in size, is opposed to LTTE's militarist authoritarianism and anti-Muslim terrorism. We have no way of making accurate quantitative estimates of the supporters and opponents of the LTTE in the North-East. However that information is not so critical to an understanding of the political character of the LTTE.

As regards the apparatus of violence, the LTTE itself is primarily a military organisation in which the political and military leaderships are merged into one in a single person. The LTTE attained its supremacy in the Tamil areas by physically annihilating the other groups. The Tigers have their own laws which are enforced with an iron fist. They have their prisons in which thousands of men and women are languishing. These prisoners include activists, supporters and suspected supporters of other political groups, and independent intellectuals who are critical of the LTTE. Tigers intensively police the Tamil homeland. They have a rudimentary bureaucracy as an appendage of the military to enforce their form of government including collection of taxes, issue of exit permits, settlement of disputes over property and approval of foreign and local NGOs to operate in the LTTE-ruled areas.

LTTE has developed an elaborate ideological apparatus to exercise hegemony over the Tamils of the North-East. It uses a range of mass communication tools over which it has a monopoly in the North-East to disseminate a narrow, militant Thamil Eelam nationalism. These tools include daily news papers, periodicals, posters, video and audio cassettes, theatre and mass meetings. Tamil nationalism has undergone modifications in the past decade in response to the coercive operations of the Sri Lankan state, the hegemonic needs of competing Tamil militant groups, and the specific needs of the LTTE to justify its militarism and maintain its ideological hold on the Tamil people. The LTTE has taken the old narrow Tamil nationalism which tended to be exclusive of the Muslims in the North-East to its logical extreme. In the Federalist phase (1952-72), Tamil nationalism served the political project of creating an ethno-territorial consciousness among the Tamils of the North-East. The ideologues of the Federal Party (FP) sought to bring together the Tamils of the North-East as a people with a common past and a common future by appeal to the core of Tamil ethnicity which, like that of any other ethnicity, resided in myths and symbols, and by pointing at the threat of the rising Sinhala buddhist state. This extensive psycho-political exercise of 'educating' the Tamils to imagine themselves as members of a larger community inhabiting a con-

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[1]Senior Economist, Norwegian Centre For International Agricultural Development, Aas, Norway, and currently Visiting Professor, Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan.

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tiguous territory from 'Point Pedro in the north to Pottuvil in the east and Puttalam in the west' relied on myths and legends and a Dravidian rhetoric with which the Muslims had very little in common. The parameters of the Tamil nationalist discourse were laid in the federalist extensive phase. However, the FP's discourse was based on a federalist conception of a Tamil homeland and nationhood within a united Lanka and conditioned by the needs of parliamentarist politics. In this phase, Tamil nationalism was non-militant in form – though it had strong chauvinist elements, and was activated mostly in the election season which came once in five years or so. There were, of course, a few occasions of mass action like the short but popular Satyagraha campaign of 1961.

In the Early Thamil Eelamist Phase (1972-83), the nationalist discourse was intensified while its parameters were redefined in terms of self-determination. The militant groups played an active role in this intensification and redefinition. At the same time, they tried to internalise the Muslims into Thamil Eelam as Islamic Tamils. This was not basically different from the FP's approach of including the Muslims with the Tamils into a larger, common category of Tamil speaking people while at the same time adopting an ethno-centric ideology that excluded them. In this phase, some pro-government Tamil politicians and a member of the NSSP in Jaffna, were among those assassinated as 'traitors' by militants. The message of this individual terrorism was that all Tamils should be loyal to the Thamil Eelam cause. In the Militant Thamil Eelamist Phase (July 1983 –), the intensification of narrow Tamil nationalism gathered further momentum with a growing accent on the so-called martial traditions of Tamil society. Of all the groups, the LTTE has been most consistently strengthening the primordialist myths and legends of Tamil ethnicity. It would seem that it has reconstructed the hard core of Tamil ethnicity with revised heroic myths, battle legends and symbols to root its exclusive and militant Tamil nationalism. This serves several purposes for the Tigers. The LTTE links its military prowess to an ancient martial tradition and claims to be its legitimate heir. Indeed, LTTE's propaganda not only compares its leader to Raja Raja Cholan but claims that the valour of the Tiger guerrillas is rooted in the Tamil martial tradition. Once the Tamil youth are made to believe in the myth that they are the proud descendents of martial ancestors, it is easier to recruit and transform them into selfless warriors. The myth and the ideology based on it and other myths are also helpful in justifying LTTE's militarism and ethnic cleansing operations.

The Tamils in the LTTE-ruled areas have become the unfortunate captives of its power apparatus – coercive and ideological. The vast majority of them have been forced to be the traumatised, silent spectators of a war in which the LTTE claims to be fighting on their behalf for their liberation. They are, of course, invited to participate in the celebration of the heroism of the Tigers, and are free to open their mouths to praise the Tigers and to denounce the 'traitors'! With the same apparatus of power, the Muslim people have been excluded ideologically and by brute force from the homeland they have shared with the Tamils for centuries. This horror drama is a total negation of the liberation the Tamil people had hoped for.

Let's face the most discomforting fact: what is going on in the North-East is a military contest between two oppressive forces, the Sri Lankan state and the LTTE, for unchallenged authority over a territory and its inhabitants. Whoever wins, the people lose. The twin evils of Tamil chauvinism and militarism have irreversibly subverted even the theoretical feasibility of Thamil Eelam as an independent democratic state. For the Tamil masses, liberation meant, and it still means, regaining their human dignity as Tamils and living and participating in a polity that guaranteed basic entitlements and equality of opportunities to all. Today, liberation in this sense has become inseparably linked to the democratisation and socio-economic transformation of the whole of Lanka. The greatest need of the hour is to uphold the original values of liberation and dare to think in terms of viable alternatives to secession. The democratic forces among the Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese should open a new dialogue on models of reconstructing Lanka as a multi-ethnic peoples' democracy. The historic task that awaits the democratic forces is the ushering in of an era of enlightenment, an era that breaks radically with the history and practices of Sinhala and Tamil chauvinisms and creates a new history and consciousness.

The conjecture that precipitated the demand for separation still continues though with constant modifications. However, to those who care to note, there are signs of a new conjuncture emerging out of the brutalisation and inhumanity of the past decade. These signs come from within the Lankan society like a silver lining of the dark clouds of war and authoritarianism. In the South, the extreme Sinhala chauvinists are losing ground. This is not to say that the institutionalised power of Sinhala chauvinism has diminished. The significant point is that for the first time in a decade we witness a visible disillusionment among the Sinhala people with the government's continuation of the war. The patriotic appeals trotted out by the government to the Sinhala youth to join the armed forces to 'defend the motherland' do not find any significant response these days. Several Sinhalese human rights activists working among the people have said that the number of Sinhalese favouring an end to the war and a political solution to meet the aspirations of the Tamils is growing. On the Tamil side, there is a similar trend with a growing number of people wanting peace with dignity and freedom.

The political challenge emanating from these trends is unprecedented. We need an institutional model for a decentralised democracy in which the society and economy can develop rapidly. We need a range of institutional innovations to practice democracy, promote sustainable economic growth, and build communities that are capable of wielding political power and managing their affairs. Federalism is being mentioned as a candidate. It has yet to be debated in a broader arena by all concerned individuals and organisations. The Sinhalese people have been continuously misinformed about federalism for four decades by the stalwarts of Sinhala nationalism. They were told that federalism meant secession of the North-East and its annexation with India. They need to be helped to unlearn the rubbish taught them by the UNP, SLFP and other Sinhala chauvinist groups. The Tamils and Muslims need to reach an understanding on how to work out viable units of devolution. It does not make sense to begin with a rigid premise about borders. The reconstruction model should be based on local units as building blocks. There is a lot of confidence building to be done between Tamils and Muslims in the North-East, and between the three communities at a national level. Federalism should be seen as a part of a larger exercise of restructuring the whole country on the basis of autonomous regions. Thus the model we need is not one that simply divides the Tamil and Sinhala areas into two large autonomous political entities but a more sophisticated one that allows

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Peace Proposals for a Settlement
The Danger of 'Trojan Horse' Tactics

by B. Tambiah, Ontario

All Tamils are one in their desire and yearning for peace and an end to their long suffering. However, it is even more important that the sufferings and sacrifice have not been in vain. Hence the overriding importance that the peace be a just one with honour, dignity and no possibility that it would be sabotaged later on, to the detriment of the Tamils, by a majority in the government. It should also ensure that the goals and ideals for which the flower of their youth gave their lives so readily, should be safeguarded within a defined homeland and a viable entity.

Nothing worthwhile has been achieved in human affairs without struggle, sacrifice and effort, though some, in the comfort and safety of their possessions, claim that by mere talks and discussions, they could deliver the goods. Hence the utmost importance of a right and just settlement to safeguard the long term interests of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, whatever be the sufferings and sacrifice of the Tamils, however long.

Beware of Peace Proposals

Ancient history records the classic example of the 'TROJAN HORSE' tactic, to win by guile what could not be achieved by arms. According to Homer's Iliad, the Greeks had besieged the City of Troy **for 10 years** without success, since the city was defended gallantly by the defenders. It was then decided to win the city by a trick. The Greeks built a large wooden horse, put some armed men inside, and sailed away pretending that they had given up the siege. The people of Troy were overjoyed, and dragged the horse inside, against the advice of some, and spent part of the night drinking and dancing. Later in the night, the men inside the horse crept out, opened the gates to the Greeks who had returned according to the plan, and the City was lost.

Hence the need of the Tamils to beware of such peace proposals which may seem reasonable and plausible, but designed to sabotage Tamil selfhood and rights, later on. Recently there have been peace missions and peace proposals, which seem reasonable and just on the surface, but generally spring loaded traps to catch the unwary. There was also a proverb in ancient times 'Beware the Romans who come with gifts'.

It is to be remembered that a short time back, the President made a stirring speech expressing his sorrow over the sufferings of the Tamils and promising large rehabilitation funds to develop the North and the East. This speech was at Vavunia directed towards the Tamils. It was the same President, who at the beginning of the 2nd Eelam war, promised 'ELLAM' to the Tamils but already preparations had been made for a huge army and the import of expensive sophisticated armour, including planes, helicopters, gunships, and naval gun boats. It was then announced that a settlement would only be considered after the 'Military Solution', which in fact meant a dictated peace at the pleasure of the Sinhalese.

Strangling Blockade

It is also to be noted that the military planning involved the indiscriminate bombing of civilians in the North, the strangling blockade to virtually starve the Tamils of all essentials, including food (fortunately prevented by international outcry and the intervention of the Red Cross, to ship the bare essentials) and also the late Defence Minister's plan to let loose the death squads, who successfully eliminated tens of thousands of rural revolutionary youth (J.V.P.) in the South. It is well to note that at no time have the Sinhalese public opinion or the government ever contemplated anything other than total domination of the Tamils, whatever be the protestations, promising justice, goodwill and rights.

It is also revealing to note that the Parliamentary Select Committee, which was assigned the task to formulate firm proposals for a political settlement, and intended to allay world opinion about the good intentions of the government, never came up with any proposal. Nor did the government of the main opposition (SLFP) ever commit themselves to any firm proposals. There can be little doubt, that in the expectation of a military solution about to be fulfilled, any commitment would be unnecessary. It was also necessary for the Army to obtain the help of the other militant groups, who had allied themselves on the government side, until the government declared its own intentions. Little is left to the imagination as to what those intentions were though such groups, wilfully or otherwise pretended that by cooperation, they could deliver the goods to the Tamils.

It is in the above context, that the Tamils would need to ask themselves, how valid, and how sincere the intentions that have now prompted the flurry of activity on the peace front. It would be hence necessary to probe the present circumstances for clues. It was after two years of military activity that the IPKF came to the conclusion that the LTTE could not be crushed and that it was an unwinnable war, despite the total occupation of the Tamil region. Within a few months after the two year period, the IPKF packed up, and left the region back into the hands of the LTTE.

It is significant that the 2nd Eelam war has also passed the two year campaign period, and heavy casualties suffered all over the Tamil region, including the capture of many Army camps with huge losses of arms and ammunition, has brought the army to face reality, as was the case with the IPKF. The 26-day battle at Vettilaikerni to advance 6 miles had shown that any advance into the peninsula would be costly, apart from the difficulty of holding the region against the will of the people. The death of 9 top military commanders in the North has also dealt a heavy blow to Army morale. It is known that almost 10% of the Army (7000) have deserted. Further increases in Army desertions are being noted, in contrast to the rapid drop in recruits willing now to join the Army. Neither the government nor the opposition, however determined, can enforce a military solution if the soldiers are demoralised and unwilling to fight. A recent report mentions that a middle level commander is to be court martialled for refusing to defend an 18-mile defence line in Mannar.

It is to be concluded that the government would try to attain through peace proposals, what cannot be attained by war. The main object has been to achieve by war or consent, the demerger of the North and the East. This would cut the base of Tamil self sufficiency, since each would not be economically viable and hence dependent on the government. Also, it would be easy for the government to set the East against the North, through manipulated stooges. Equally the Vanni could be set up against the North, such that Tamils all over the Tamil region would be at each others' throats. It could be a Pandora's Box of troubles, and Tamil cohesion, shattered. The Muslim card would also be played with devastating effect on the Tamils.

All of the above, is for the Tamils to

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No Harm Can Come From a Federal Structure

by Stanley Jayaweera
former Sri Lanka Ambassador in Germany

The late Dr. E.W. Adikaram, who, to my knowledge, was one of the few men in this country who practised what he preached, often used to say that a nationalist was a mentally deranged man. While agreeing with him, intellectually, that this is so, particularly in the present state of the world, I would, by the same logic, say that anyone who considered nothing more important in life than establishing one's separate identity through some form of sub-nationalism, be it racial, religious, ethnic, caste or any other variety, would fall into the same category, and, indeed, require psychiatric treatment.

To want to kill another, or, indeed, to want to die for something 'that is' not rooted in actuality, would be to mistake appearance for reality, the chaff for the grain, and the genuine for the spurious.

I am not living in the clouds. But that is how I look at the whole question of relations between the Sinhala majority and the non-Sinhala minorities in this country who consider it their home, and the issue of what form or structure the Shri Lankan state should take to enable its people to live in peace and amity.

Sabbath was made for man and not man for sabbath. The Buddha likened the Dhamma to a raft that one uses to cross a river from one shore to another. Once its purpose is served you cast it away and not carry it about like a millstone round your neck. So is it with governmental structures. They are devised to achieve certain objectives. A structure is not an end in itself over the form of which we should shed blood or quarrel endlessly. Once one has accepted the whole country, and not merely a part of it, as one's homeland, and pledged loyalty to it (that is the irreducible minimum), issues such as merger and what form the Shri Lankan state should take, unitary or federal, will lose the importance they have now been invested with. It is upto the majority community, that is, the Sinhalese to make the minorities feel that the whole of Shri Lanka is their homeland and that their separate identities will be guaranteed both in the letter, and more importantly, in spirit, under a new dispensation.

If, to win that trust, the price that has to be paid is a federal structure for the country, as has now been proposed, I would wholeheartedly go along with it, despite misgivings certain English–educated and influential Sinhala circles entertain about its desirability. I believe that the vast mass of both Sinhala and Tamil people who are monolingual do not really bother about what form the Shri Lankan state should take, unless they are whipped up, once again, into a frenzy by designing and self-seeking politicians on both sides, They are, as most sensible people all over the world are, more interested in the practical problems of day-to-day living.

The situation to which we have to respond today is vastly different from what it was a little less than 40 years ago. At that time, the mere inclusion in the constitution, of Tamil as a regional language, and some accommodation on matters such as land alienation, would have resulted in the Sinhala leadership winning the confidence and trust of the Tamil people and other minorities. But some of our power crazy politicians saw to it that this was not to be. Accordingly, we have to begin at the beginning. Acceptance by the Sinhalese of the federal principle would be an appropriate starting point.

A Boundaries Commission could be entrusted with the task of demarcating the boundaries of the constituent units, bearing in mind two principal objectives – namely, (1) devolution of maximum possible power to the people to enable them to govern themselves and (2) preservation of the cultural, linguistic, and religious identities of the people living in the country. Naturally, in demarcating the boundaries of the constituent regions, the economic viability of each of them would be a very important consideration.

In a recent interview to a newspaper (*The Island* of Sunday, October 18 the TULF leader, M. Sivasithamparam, has said: 'I can swear on anything that a federal solution means absolutely no harm to the Sinhalese people'. I think that was a cry from the heart.

As a Sinhalese who has, from his schoolboy days, been espousing the cause of the non-English educated Sinhala, Tamil and other non-Sinhala people, I would unhesitatingly accept the assurance of Mr. Sivasithamparam. I also totally accept his statement that the origin of the demand for a separate state was the refusal of successive governments to meet the reasonable demands of the Tamil people and the breach of faith on the part of those governments.

Let me be frank. My experience both as a private individual and as a public servant, has been that much of the harm done to the Sinhala masses – and, in any community it is the welfare of the masses that matters – has been by the Sinhala leadership. It is their own kind who have let down the Sinhala people. I find it difficult to think of any people, anywhere, who are so shallow, vacuous, and rootless as most English-educated Sinhalese are. Their gods are power, position, and money.

Those who shout loudest about the danger to the Sinhala people if a federal structure is agreed to, are the very people who cannot, and, indeed, do not, even if they can, talk a word of Sinhala – not even in their own homes, between wives and husbands and their children (in fact, many children are still told to refer to their parents as Mummy and Daddy!), read a Sinhala newspaper, see a Sinhala film, sing or listen to a Sinhala song, or even sign their names in Sinhala.

I shall illustrate. The Presidential Commission on Youth (1990) stated that it was firmly convinced that there was widespread discrimination against those who are monolingual – be they Sinhala or Tamil, and recommended that strong measures be taken immediately to prevent that kind of linguistic discrimination. I am personally aware of instances where a Sinhala member of the Commission replies in English to letters sent to him in Sinhala by those who know very little English or no English at all. Now, this is a complete violation of the language laws of the country and is punishable in a court of law – apart from it being completely immoral. That is the calibre of our Sinhala leadership – not only astonishing, but disgusting, coming from those who pontificate about the state of public morality prevalent in the country.

Those who make a song and dance about Buddhism are no better. To what schools do their children go? I know of several Sinhala Buddhist (both male and female) principals of even Buddhist schools who wax eloquent to parents on the value of a Buddhist education, but send their own children to non-Buddhist schools, even if they have to travel miles by bus to do so. Despite their tall talk of being

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The Case for a Free Media in Sri Lanka

The main points of a speech made by Lucien Rajakarunanayake, journalist and member of the Action Committee of the Free Media Movement, at several public meetings organised recently by the movement in Colombo and at other centres.

by Lucien Rajakarunanayake

What is the Media Freedom that we are concerned with? It is a wrong notion that media freedom means merely the right to publish newspapers. It is more than that. It is not the ability to publish news. That is only one aspect of it, as the news can also be totally one sided.

The media freedom that we seek today is a much wider concept. It is, firstly, the right of the people of this country to be informed of the truth about matters that affect their day to day lives, the truth about the pressing and significant developments and crises in our society. It is about politics, about war, about education, about AIDS, about the environment.

Media freedom is inextricably involved with the defence and growth of democracy. A society that has no access to information about the events that affect it most will be in no position to take the democratic decisions needed to provide solutions to the problems facing it.

Take the situation in Sri Lanka today. In my view there are two key issues facing our society. The first is the war of separation in the North and East, the other is the future of democracy.

What do our people know about the war that is taking such a toll of lives of Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim citizens? Do we really know how many Tamils, call them Tigers or plain Tamils, have been killed in the past two years since the fighting resumed? Can we not see that official sources of information about the battlefront have fallen victim to the Westmoreland Syndrome which was seen in the Vietnam war? If 10 US soldiers died in action, the dispatches added that at least 50 to 100 Vietcong were killed. Are our official reports not doing the same? When 3 soldiers are killed, we are told that three times three Tigers were also killed. Fancy estimates of Tiger deaths are given which can never be verified. Journalists have often noted that the casualty rates for Tigers given by official sources tend to make it five to ten times the government casualty rate in major operations.

Should not the people know why Sinhalese and Tamil youth are dying in such numbers? Is there a need for such killing? Do they not have a right to be informed of these things? Should not the people know how much is spent on the purchase of a single tank? Should this be kept a secret from the public of this country? If an aircraft crashes, should not the public, who paid for it, know how it happened? Are these military secrets? Why did an aircraft which carried explosives also carry fuel and 13 airmen? Is it democracy to deny this information to the people?

Isn't this the principle of accountability which flows from the financial burdens the people are called upon to bear for the prosecution of this war? This is what we seek when we ask for the right to information. This is the essence of democracy.

The FMM demands that the constitution of Sri Lanka should be suitably amended to include the right to information as a jusiticiable right of the people in addition to the existing clauses ensuring freedom of expression, which should also be strengthened. Isn't it significant that our country that subscribes to the UN Declaration of Human Rights, includes freedom of expression in its constitution but not the right to information?

It is the lack of information that prevents our people from discussing the realities of this war. Why cannot our people openly discuss the possibility of separation as a solution to the ethnic conflict? Are we to wait till separation is imposed upon us as the only solution to end this slaughter of youth on both sides, this senseless killing of civilians?

Second, there is the question of the freedom of the media in the context of democracy. This involves the freedom of newspapers to publish what they wish without fear of threats from the State or any other quarter.

While the press was involved with the freedom movement in the pre-independence period, in the immediate aftermath of independence there was some degree of freedom of the press, due to the liberal attitudes of the leaders of that time. This freedom was also the result of prevailing economic conditions; there was the relative economic prosperity of the post-war period. And the social tensions of the post-colonial period had not yet surfaced. But as the economy worsened, and social tensions emerged, the freedom of the press began to diminish. This has happened under every government, under every political party or coalition which held power since the early 1950s.

The press was muzzled to deal with the Hartal of 1953. The left-wing 'Trine' was tried for sedition. Emergency powers used to curb the reporting of trade union news during strikes. The first SLFP government of Mrs. Bandaranaike, supported by the Left, sought to establish a Press Commission in order to regulate the press. The subsequent UNP Government, under the so-called liberal Dudley Senanayake, did not hesitate to place restrictions on the transport of opposition newspapers. State advertising was always denied to newspapers critical of government policy.

The United Front Government of the SLFP, LSSP and CP took over the largest newspaper group – Lake House – and helped create an even worse monster, with full State patronage and authority. Mrs. Bandaranaike's government sealed the Sun Group of newspapers.

The UNP which defeated the SLFP and came to power in 1977 with a pledge to undo the take-over of Lake House was no better. It retained control of Lake House. In addition it took over the Times Group as well. That was during the Jayawardena government. The Premadasa UNP government which followed continues to retain Lake House. Several of these governments also imposed restrictions on the 'Aththa' and other organs of the opposition.

In Jaffna, the LTTE has banned the only regional newspaper in the island – 'Eelanadu'. The JVP not only enforced a boycott of certain newspapers but even killed those who sold or read newspapers which it did not like. Today's leaders of the DUNF, when they were in power in the UNP, did not oppose the curbs on press freedom and the blatant use of Lake House and radio and TV for government and party propaganda. There is no political party which has held even a modicum of power through legal means or through terror that has not acted against the freedom of expression, the

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freedom of information and the freedom of the press. They are all rightly tarnished with the same brush, as far as media freedom is concerned.

What do we have today? The media remains curbed in many ways. The most obvious is the control of government advertising. How is it that a government which claims to believe in a liberal economy decides, at Cabinet level, the newspapers to which departmental and state corporation advertising should be given? Is that not a means of controlling newspapers? Why should the organisation that sells State Lotteries not be given the power to decide which newspapers it should advertise in, on the basis of the target market among lottery buyers? It is hardly a secret that the government exercises some control over private newspapers through the State-owned banks from which these newspapers seek loan facilities.

Why does a government which has liberalised the import of almost everything from luxury cars to kiddies' toys continue a licensing system for the import of newsprint, the most important raw material for a newspaper? Isn't it curious that a country which claims to have a fully liberalised economy with complete market orientation, and a Free Press, has three very significant items under licence? They are explosives, narcotics and newsprint.

Of late there is also the regular use of the laws governing the Powers and Privileges of Parliament to curb the freedom of journalists. Privilege issues are becoming a common feature of parliamentary business, in a system where, under the existing law, Parliament is both prosecutor and judge on matters of privilege, unless it decides to refer a matter to the Courts.

There is also the new use of the principle of *sub judice* to curb publication and discussion of matters of public interest and importance, and the recourse to the laws of sedition, available under Emergency Regulations, again to curb the publication of news important matters which affect the public and democracy and so stifle information and discussion.

There are other means of curbing the press, too. There are the overt and covert threats to newspaper proprietors and journalists. The whole system of unseen threats is intended to create a mood of self-censorship among newspaper proprietors and journalists. Not satisfied with that, there are the more direct threats too – threatening phone calls, the recent open attack on journalists covering an opposition political event in the city, the stabbing of cartoonist Yunoos; attacks on journalists by the police, government politicians and their supporters are also becoming a regular feature.

What is even more tragic is that attacks on journalists are now being perpetrated by politicians and their supporters in Opposition ranks as well. The fact is that all our politicians see the journalist as a threat to their freedom to mislead the public for political gain.

The FMM demand for a Free Press does not end with newspapers that are free of state control. Radio and television have never had freedom of any sort in this country, under any government. They have always been controlled and have always been the mouthpiece of the party in power. There can be no media freedom in a country where the largest newspaper publishing organisation – Lake House, – the only radio station, and two of the three TV channels are under state control. Even the one private TV channel, which began operation recently, is not permitted to air local news. While the two state-owned TV channels dish out the same news bulletin, the private channel broadcasts the BBV-TV news which is pre-recorded; however, if the news of the day has a reference to Sri Lanka, the telecast is not shown due to sudden 'unfavourable atmospheric conditions'.

None of this is the condition of a healthy democracy. It is worse when we live in a society, which, although used to the ballot, still has some regard for feudal, authoritarian values, is easily intimidated by power, and where free elections have not taken place for over a decade, although several polls have been held.

It is now even worse in a situation where there are only a few agencies of the st te ready to strengthen democracy. Recent experience has shown the people that they cannot depend solely on parliament to safeguard democracy. We cannot depend solely on the Courts to defend democracy, either.

That is why the Free Media Movement was launched by a group of journalists from several newspapers – the mainstream press and what is conveniently referred to as the Alternative Press – journalists with varying political views and positions, to bring to the public the truth about the media in Sri Lanka, and to create a public opinion which we hope will force all political parties to place the question of media freedom high on the agenda of their political programmes.

Our struggle is not for higher wages, although it is a fact that journalism is among the worst paid professions in the country. Our demand is not for special favours such as houses or pensions, although journalists do have these needs, just like other sections with fixed incomes.

Journalists in Sri Lanka have for too long isolated themselves from the public, mainy due to false elitist attitudes, and because they did not fully realise the threat to the broader freedoms of society through the threats to the right to free expression. We now realise the time for such separate existence is over, because the freedom of the citizen is necessarily linked with the freedom of the journalist. The right to information of the citizen is dependent on the freedom of the journalist to inform. In short the absence of a truly free media means the absence of democracy.

We are not a political organisation in the sense that we have no affiliation with any political party. But what we discuss is certainly the stuff of politics, for which we make no apology. We do not ask for the overthrow or the defeat of the government. We hope that the government in power will remedy the wrongs we draw attention to. However, if as a result of what we say and explain, the public is helped to make up its mind and to act politically in any particular way, then that is the right of the public.

We are aware of the threats faced by those who demand greater democracy in our society. If we were to be curbed by such fears, we would then be content to write only the weather reports. We believe that our task and action has relevance to the prevailing social condition. The FMM is ready to go among the public to create public opinion for the following demands, and call upon all political parties of the right and left, or even the middle, to state their position clearly on these issues. We demand such statements well ahead of the next election, because the public has a right to know what their policies are on these issues.

– Free Lake House from government control. As an initial measure, implement the existing legislation which provides for broadbasing the ownership of Lake House. It has been ignored by the SLFP Government which took over Lake House, and the subsequent government which was elected on a pledge that it would undo the takeover. Give the public a time frame by when this would be done.

– Free Radio and TV from State ownership and control. If the State needs a channel for Radio and TV information or even propaganda,

keep it, but allow private radio and TV stations to compete freely, vying for licence fees, advertisements with the right to the free broadcast of news.

– Introduce an amendment to the Constitution to ensure the Right to Information in keeping with the UN Declarations and the International Covenants on the subject.

– Repeal the present Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act which is used to curb and intimidate journalists, and remove from parliament judiciary powers in deciding on matters of privilege.

– Stop the use of laws against sedition to harass and threaten journalists and newspapers, there-

– Stop resorting to the principle of *sub judice* to prevent debate and public discussion of matters of public interest, which are before the Courts, which can in no way influence or affect the findings of a learned Court of Law. Stop the new habit of running to the courts with a plaint to obstruct discussion of public issues in the Press and Parliament.

– Stop the control of Government advertising in a manner detrimental to the freedom of expression.

– Allow the Free Import of newsprint.

– Make a public declaration condemning attacks on journalists by the Police and political thugs, and explain what measures your political party would take to prevent such attacks in the future.

These are the minimum demands of the Free Media Movement. We call upon all political parties to state their position on them, and enter into a dialogue with us and the public on these issues.

This is only the beginning of this campaign. We will take this message to the people in every part of the country. We call on the public to discuss these matters in their political parties, youth organisations, trade unions, social and community groups. We assure the public that the Free Media Movement will carry on this campaign whatever political party is in power, in the larger interests of democracy in Sri Lanka.

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building smaller viable units into a federal framework to facilitate decentralisation, rapid development, and the enhancement of peoples' entitlements and capabilities.

A multi-ethnic Lanka needs a new identity, a new consciousness and, of course, new symbols; for instance, the Lion flag can not be a symbol of a multi-ethnic society. This may sound idealistic in these days of break-up of the former Soviet Union into nation states and rising ethno-nationalism everywhere. In our situation, having seen the worst of ethno-nationalism and its limits, we have returned to the idea of a multi-ethnic reconstruction of Lanka as a practical, political economic, and cultural necessity. If the cry for Thamil Eelam was a product of the separatist practices of Sinhala ethno-nationalism, the renewed interest in a multi-ethnic alternative is a reaction to the workings of both Sinhala and Tamil nationalisms which have clearly revealed their limits in the past decade. The whole society has been dragged into barbaric violence by these two nationalisms and their bellicose exponents are clearly determined to keep the people repressed and benighted. We turn to multi-ethnic alternatives in our search for a new political practice to realise what has been negated by Sinhala and Tamil nationalisms – liberation.

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range artillery, and other weapons to bolster the security operations this year (1992).

In this year (1992) a decision was made to purchase three Russian Mi-8 helicopters, four Argentine light ground attack aircraft and four Fast Attack Craft (FAC) among others for use against the Tigers next year (1993).

The ability to get French technology to build FACs for the Navy this year (1992) has been described as a new development. Already Simone Marine, a French ship-building company, was building two FACs in France. The two vessels will arrive in Colombo in the middle of next year (1993).

Following their delivery the Colombo Dockyard was hoping to build two more 19 metre long FACs (on the same design) in Colombo.

However the acquisition of new weapons will not help the government to defeat the Tigers militarily unless there was a clear strategy with a determined political leadership, analysts said. The realisation that further miscalculations will allow the Tigers to gain the upper hand may result in the government changing its attitude towards the war some believe.

(Courtesy: *The Sunday Island.***)**

Pannum Parathamum

The recent upsurge of interest in Pannisai among Tamils living in the West, must surely be welcome. Pannisai is true Tamilian music and carries with it a rich literature of devotion, the works of the Saiva Samaya Acharyas.

Thayaleswari Parenthaman is a welcome addition to the array of musicians based in the U.K. In March last year she, together with Vijayambigai Indrakumar, co-produced the first Indian Classical Dance Programme in London, set to Pannisai. Under the auspices of the West London Tamil School, she followed this up with another production – 'Pannam Parathamum' in October.

Until recently a Lecturer in Fine Arts at the University of Jaffna, Thayaleswari Parenthaman has carried forward an idea nurtured by the then Vice-Chancellor, the late Prof. K. Kailaspathy, who encouraged the Department to foster the combination of Pannisai with Parathum, and the recent productions are tributes to his pioneering effort.

The theme for the October concert was Panniru Thirumurai, and verses had been chosen from each of the twelve components ranging from Thevaram to Periyapuranam with two additional pieces – A Thirupugal and Kavadi as the finale.

The rendering of Pannisai was majestic. Mrs. Parenthaman laid a firm vocal foundation on which the choreographer built the dance sequence, treating each verse as a Padam. Her voice raised and reverberated appropriately for songs such as Thodudaya Sevian in Pann Naddapadai (Ragam Kembeeranattai), and dipped low and flowed sweetly for items such as Masil Veenyum in the Raga Saveri. We are very privileged to have an artiste of her quality based in London.

Choreography was led by Anushathevi Srisankar who was assisted by a group of very accomplished artistes among whom were Premaladevi Ravindran, Menaka Raviraj, Uma Jegateesan, Premalatha Sarma, Thushyanthi Thiyagarajah, Subashini Loganathan, Shantini Thayaparan and Suntharakumari Sounthararajan. The dancers were all accomplished artistes and are holders of degrees or diplomas from Universities or Institutes of Arts and Culture in Jaffna or

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1992 Ends with Number of Questions Unanswered

from Rita Sebastian in Colombo

1992 ended with no headway being made in resolving the north-east conflict, although there were assurances from the political leadership during the course of the year that a solution would be found by the year end.

Although the government had committed itself to finding a consensus solution through the Parliamentary Select Committee, when the deliberations of the committee wound up in December there were hardly any signs of ethnic reconciliation. On the contrary the committee was found to be deeply polarised. The ruling United National Party (UNP) and the main opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party were agreed on the de-merger of the north-east provinces, while the Tamil parties were equally adamant on a permanently merged north-east province. Surprisingly the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, which for months had engaged itself in discussions with the Tamil parties for power sharing in the north-east provinces threw in its lot with the Sinhala parties on the issue of the de-merger.

The Tamil parties were not only angry, at what they described as the deception of the Sinhala parties to address the legitimate grievances of the Tamils, but were also faced with the fact that the two main Sinhala parties had backed down on their previous commitment to a federal arrangement and instead offered the Indian model of devolution.

Sri Lankan political leaders have always thought of the Indian constitution as more unitary than federal in form. With the Select Committee however it was argued that the Indian constitution was essentially a unitary constitution, with some federal characteristics and that this was a model which could be more easily reconciled with the entrenched unitary character of the Sri Lankan state.

The main problem is that if Sri Lanka wants to alter the unitary character of the state it will have to be done through a referendum. And that seems a prospect that neither the UNP or the SLFP will be willing to resort to at the moment.

In the midst of all this came reports that Justice and Higher Education Minister, A.C.S. Hameed was on a peace mission to London and Paris to dialogue with the LTTE leadership.

Although Minister Hameed categorically denied any such meeting, it was not an unlikely scenario considering that the government has never been averse to talking to the Tigers to end the deadlock and return the north-east to peace and normalcy so that the massive defence budget can be channelled into development.

So at the beginning of 1993 we are just as uncertain as we were in 1992 as to the outcome of the ongoing conflict. 1992 was a mixed year for Sri Lanka. In the economic sphere government points proudly to certain positive improvements like the increase in per capita incomes and a foreign exchange reserve of one and a quarter billion US dollars.

The government has also successfully promoted investments in the south and aggressively pursued the establishing of 200 garment factories providing 100,000 jobs in rural areas.

However, as far as the ordinary citizen is concerned the economic benefits do not trickle down. The prohibitive costs of essential items has a harsh impact on workers with fixed incomes.

President Premadasa however seems comforted by the feeling that the political opposition is badly fragmented and drifting without a sense of direction. The internal strife within the Sri Lanka Freedom Party seems to have reached a point of no return. Against this the UNP remains the more disciplined and more bureaucratically organised party in the country with branches countrywide. Political observers however seem troubled that in 1992 none of the social and political issues confronting the country were addressed. They also see no significant shift in the Sinhala hardline position on Tamil demands despite general weariness on the war and its terrible consequences.

Will the military and political stalemate continue indefinitely? Will Sri Lanka be able to manage problems of unemployment, inflation and regional disparities and yet pursue economic reform and private sector development? Will the country continue to attract foreign investment in 1993 without any progress on a solution to the north-east war? These are questions for which nobody seems to have any answers at present.

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the fullest sense of the word.

This is the underlying urge behind the struggle for Tamilian nationhood. The demand for a distinct identity manifested initially through democratic processes. Militant dimensions came about subsequently. The urge for self-rule finally became an assertion for the right of self-determination.

In this situation, what the CWC has maintained consistently, bears repetition. Full autonomy alone holds the prospect of turning the Tamils into the mainstream of national endeavour.

The select committee of parliament with an obligation to search for peace has meandered for one year and is mired in an impasse. The CWC laments this turn of events. The CWC submitted its proposals to the select committee of parliament on the December 10, 1991. The developments over one year culminating on December 11, 1992 has shaken the CWC's faith in the capability of the select committee in evolving a strategy of peace.

However, the CWC's faith in the viability of its proposals in laying the foundation for peace remains unshaken.

The CWC has the utmost clarity about the aspirations of the Tamils. It was with such understanding and after due deliberation that the CWC's thinking crystallised into the peace proposals. The perceptions of the select committee however remain unclear. But one thing is certain. The thinking of the CWC is at complete variance with the thought process of the select committee. The CWC has therefore no option, but to dissociate itself from the select committee.

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THE SUB-CONTINENTAL SCENE

'Fishing in India's Troubled Waters'

by Aabha Dixit

The Ayodhya controversy has allowed Pakistan and to an extent Bangladesh to fish in India's troubled waters. The initial reaction in the two neighbouring countries was one of acute criticism of Hindu militancy as well as the failure of the Indian government to protect the lives of minorities. It looked as if in one stroke, New Delhi's legitimate claims to a Muslim majority Kashmir were in doubt. More importantly it looked as if Islamabad had finally got its act together and secured the right to speak on behalf of Indian muslims as a result of the Babri masjid action.

A communal condition in South Asia is not new. The Indian Subcontinent, is split into several countries, which are intrinsically linked through ties of common culture, language, customs and even have similar problems, all of which have cross-border influences and have become major factors in domestic politics. The present controversy over which structure should stand at the disputed site in Ayodhya has seen in the past acute reaction in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

A peculiar kind of retributive justice operates in South Asia. A violent communal incident involving Hindus and Muslims invariably finds spontaneous reaction across borders. In this form of retributive justice, political parties and leaders throughout South Asia have preferred to let communal passions rage rather than appeal with the voice of reason to secularize inter-state relations.

The Nawaz Sharif government, battling the challenge by former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, reacted almost instantly calling the demolition 'an abhorrent act of extreme fanaticism'. Led by the right wing Islamic parties, passions in the streets throughout Pakistan rose high and the government boasted of taking elaborate security measures to prevent Pakistan's minorities from facing the collective wrath of a provoked mob.

There were reports that Nawaz Sharif intended to capitalize upon the embarrassment that the demolition had caused the Indian state by moving the United Nations and Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) as this incident had 'pained not only Muslims the world over but has also caused concern amongst all rational people'. Clearly Sharif's attempt was to join both the Muslim and secular countries into exerting pressure upon India and gain legitimacy for their claim to become the sole guardians of the Muslims in South Asia.

The Babri mosque incident provided the right wing Islamic groupings their first real chance to achieve this status ever since the movement for a separate Muslim homeland began in South Asia in the 20th century. Clearly under pressure from Islamabad, the OIC has requested the U.N. Secretary general to inquire into the communal situation arising from the Ayodhya incident, but deliberately ignored a similar inquiry into attacks against minorities in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Not the First Time

But as has happened in the past, communal issues in the Subcontinent have worked more on emotion than rationalism. This was not the first time that communal events in India have produced stinging reaction in Pakistan. The echoes of the Ram Janambhoomi-Babri masjid controversy have constantly resounded in Pakistan since 1989. In November that year, 18 Hindu temples in Sukkur and Jacobabad in Sind Province were burnt and by late 1990, political parties and clerics had been able to use the issue to secure vote banks in the elections to the national and provincial assemblies that saw Nawaz Sharif and his UI coalition come to power. Every party since then had pledged to do more than the 'other to save Indian Muslims from Hindu extremists.'

Through the decade long Martial Law of General Zia-ul Haq, the clerics had been able to mould public opinion to devastating effect and this in turn saw increasing intolerance of minorities in Pakistan. The Ahmediyas, a minority Muslim sect, came in for more discrimination, the Christians in Pakistan reeled under Muslim onslaught and the Hindus suffered every time a 'kar seva' (voluntary religious service) was organised in Ayodhya. During the November 1990 'kar seva', the Jamiat Islami spearheaded anti-Hindu riots that stretched from Quetta where a miniscule Hindu population was terrorized to Sind and Punjab, where in the cities of Hyderabad and Latifabad three temples were destroyed, while in neighbouring Siroghat, the Rama Pir temple was looted and set on fire.

Mass Demonstration

This time around, despite the benefit of hindsight the Sharif government displayed no real will to stop the demonstrators who filled the streets and began systematically targeting Hindu localities and places of worship. Hindu families were attacked in Lahore, Karachi, Hyderabad, Rawalpindi and Sukkur and an estimated 60 Hindu and Jain temples and six shrines burnt or razed to the ground. Mass demonstration egged on by the entire political spectrum led to Indian diplomats' houses being attacked in which the Indian Consul General's house in Karachi was looted and set on fire, while the security forces made no attempt to prevent the musclemen from committing similar crimes against which they were supposed to be demonstrating.

The significant difference among political parties in India and Pakistan to their respective communal problems has been that in the former, a broad band of political opinion reacted unfavourably to the completely unwarranted game of brinkmanship that the BJP had pursued which in turn led to events that got out of control. These political parties appealed for calm and sought to reinforce among the ordinary people the belief that secularism would survive. Political reassurance to the Muslim community by the government and other political parties was given by committing themselves to re-building the Babri masjid. In Pakistan, however, through the four days of communal mayhem, the microscopic Hindu population of 1.25 million has received no public assurances from any political party to work in securing their safety. The fear of being branded soft on minorities made the People's Democratic Alliance and the National Democratic Alliance join the UI-Islamic fundamentalist parties' street action.

Provocative Statements

The leaders were quick to point out that the desecration of the Babri masjid was violative of the pact between former Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and former Pakistan Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan that had sought to safeguard the religious places of the minority communities in their respective countries. Conveniently forgetting that they too were wilfully violating the same accord

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right wing politicians like Liaquat Baloch of the Jamiat-I-Islami expressed aloud their belief that the repeated failure of the Indian government to protect minority lives, property and rights had made the time ripe for another partition of India along communal lines. While such bellicose statements would pander to religious zealots in Pakistan, they expose the skin deep concern they have for Muslims living in India, whom they claim to protect. Such provocative statements can only benefit right wing Hindu parties who would make political capital by swinging large masses of uncommitted voters into their fold, leaving the Indian Muslims exposed.

Violence across the border has led to New Delhi strongly condemning 'abhorrent and organized acts of vandalism' in Pakistan in which 12 Hindus have been killed. All provinces in Pakistan have reported loss of life among the minorities and extensive damage to their property and temples. Government ministers like Sheikh Rashid and Ejaz-ul-Haq have been leading rallies that have had powerful demonstration effects upon emotionally surcharged Pakistanis, who have gone on a violent anti-Hindu spree.

Domestic Issues

In Bangladesh too, domestic issues have become inter-twined with the reaction to the Babri masjid demolition and violence has been reported from Dhaka and Chittagong. The Jamiat-I-Islami has been in the forefront of street demonstrations that have turned violent in Hindu majority areas. The Jamiat, which has been attacking the Khaleda Zia government for getting to trial its leader Prof. Golam Azam as a 1971 war criminal, has sought to use violence to destabilize the Khaleda Zia government. Here too, the Babri masjid issue has come in handy to perpetrate violence against the Hindus to shore up support among the majority Muslims.

It is clear that while Islamabad and its politicians have sought to pay lip service on the issue of safeguarding Muslim lives in India, they have a splendid opportunity of bringing home to the rest of the world security arrangements made for their minorities. Instead, unprovoked violence will put Islamabad in the dock for its failure to do its human rights duty and wash away most of its criticism of the Indian government.

South Asia which houses every fifth human being on earth is also the largest untapped market for the developed world. It is a chronically underdeveloped region with a hysterically overdeveloped sense of religious nationalism that has never allowed material prosperity for its citizens to become the highest priority for its governments. Instead, huge spending on defense and law and order operations arising from such communal incidents have become the handmaiden to fundamentalist and extreme elements in the political spectrum of their respective countries. It is a pity, that innocent people have continued to suffer the ravaging effects of politics in a sordid drama that the rest of the world has watched with astonishment.

Can Secularism Be Rescued in India?

by Kuldip Nayar

Questions are being asked whether India will be able to save its secular polity.

One is told that the West is aghast at the events in Ayodhya and their aftermath because it considered India compassionate and tolerant.

The fear is legitimate because the Hindu fundamentalists were able to demolish the disputed Babri Masjid without any challenge. They violated the undertaking given to the highest court that they would protect the structure. And the security forces took sides in the disturbances that followed at many places, killings scores of worked-up Muslim protesters.

Many independent observers returning from Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Bombay and Jaipur have testified that the confrontation was between the police and the Muslims. This is reminiscent of the riots in Jamshedpur, Bhagalpur and Meerut, where the police did not control the violence but were party to it.

At that time I saw Hindu temples going up within police areas with a vengeance; most were dedicated to Hanuman, the monkey god. This violated the letter and spirit of instructions issued years ago, which stressed that religion was a private affair and no temple, mosque, church or gurdwara could be built within police precincts.

True, when the security forces lose their impartiality, the secular credentials of the state become suspect. Yet this is not the complete picture.

Average Hindu Distressed

The average Hindu has felt distressed over the demolition of the mosque and does not condone those responsible. He is particularly worried about the country's unity, which he believes cannot be maintained if the 110 million Muslim population is alienated.

The Hindus, who constitute 82 percent of the population, could have had a Hindu rashtriya when India won freedom. The Hindu Mahasabha preached that. But they preferred secularism because that was the ethos of the national movement led by Mahatma Gandhi.

That is also the ethos of their religion, which has no pope, church or religious discipline. It is the sense of accommodation that has distinguished it from other religions, which effected conversions by fire and sword.

No Jewish Persecution

Jewish leaders have told me that India is the only country where Jews have never faced religious persecution.

What the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and its political arms like the Bhartiya Janata Party and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad are trying to do is hijack Hinduism and make it monolithic, even at the expense of deforming it.

Muslim fundamentalism has helped them. Even the movement for more democratic rights in Kashmir is cited as a Muslim challenge to Delhi.

Hence the false claims by L.K. Advani, the BJP leader, who insists on repeating *ad nauseam* that 46 Hindu temples have been destroyed in the valley. (Independent organizations have verified that this is not true.)

The violent retaliation in Bangladesh and Pakistan is further grist for the BJP mill. The reported move by some West Asian countries to restrict oil supplies to India will reinforce their pet line that Hindus in India are besieged by hostile Muslim countries.

Playing Anti-Muslim Card

It is the anti-Muslim card that the BJP has been playing. It would like to arm itself with any additional argument to poison the minds of Hindus, the majority of whom are still secular. A weak and battered government, headed by a vacillating Prime Minister, and the split among the non-BJP political parties, will only send the wrong signals and further weaken the institutions.

The Constitution has consecrated the rule of law and has assured equality to all communities. Religion is not mixed with politics. Unlike Britain, Italy or Pakistan, India has no state religion. But the BJP, without spelling it out, wants Hinduism to have an official status, *de facto* if not *de jure*.

It would have been far more honest

had the BJP placed the proposition before the nation directly. Instead, it has been articulating the Hindu sentiment in the name of Ram and duping the community, as if the Muslims are against building the temple in the god's name.

Party Adds Strength

This has paid dividends to the party because it has increased its strength in the Lok Sabha from eight members to 118.

Therefore, it is no use fooling ourselves. The country has now a determined party that wants to convert India into the Hindu rashtriya. It won only 20 percent of votes in the last election, but it may continue to employ several methods to polarize the country.

How to repair the damage caused to our composite culture is the biggest task facing the nation. The first priority should be to resuscitate our weakened institutions. The judiciary has become effete; it is too slow and cumbersome in its operation.

The lawsuit challenging the requisition of the disputed land, where the foundation stone of the mandir was laid, remained pending for months. Had the judgment been delivered five days earlier, the demolition could probably have been avoided. The judges' tardiness has cost the country dearly.

Delayed Judgment

Even worse is the delayed judgment on which of the two communities owns the site. The case has been pending for 40 years. On the other hand, what can we say about a political party that says faith comes before the law and violates the orders of the Supreme Court?

Another institution sadly contaminated is the police. It is an integral part of the steel frame that administers India and cannot but be impartial.

Some policemen were killed in Bombay and elsewhere, but that is no justification for the force's singling out Muslims for retaliation. Politicization was bad enough, communalization is worse. There is no escape from having a mixed police force on a substantial scale; their training too, needs to be reoriented.

The press, probably the most influential institution, has acquitted itself well this time. Virtually no newspaper tried to defend the BJP, unlike in 1990, when the police were criticized for using force to protect the disputed structure.

A couple of English dailies have changed the tune and so have a few Hindi publications, probably under pressure. But initially, they, too, were critical. Even otherwise, the condemnation of the BJP is so wide and strident that a few voices in its support have failed to convince anyone.

Even if the institutions are revived, they will be of little use in the face of the intolerance sweeping the country. I can never forget the advice Mahatma Gandhi gave to a Punjabi Hindu who lost his 10-year-old son during the 1947 riots and wanted to take revenge on the Muslim community.

Gandhi looked at him with sympathy, but said the way to shame the Muslims was to adopt a 10-year-old Muslim orphan and bring him up in the Islamic tradition.

Both Hindus and Muslims should think likewise. By adopting orphans from each other's community, they would honour universal Indian values that have stood the test of time.

This may set in motion a process that may retrieve our ethos and image. It is a pity that the West exaggerates our difficulties and minimizes our efforts.

(Courtesy: *India Abroad*).

T.N. Govt. Blamed for lapses in Rajiv Gandhi's Security

NEW DELHI – A federal commission has cited the Tamil Nadu government for major security lapses in the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, charging that special protection was withdrawn.

The report by Supreme Court Judge J.S. Verma faulted the Intelligence Bureau for not sharing information with the state police.

A day before the killing, it said, Gandhi should have been given protection by the elite National Security Guards, as cover by the special protection group was withdrawn.

Triggered a Device

Gandhi was killed when a woman with alleged links to a Sri Lankan terrorist group triggered explosives strapped on her body while the Prime Minister accepted greetings at a public meeting in Sriperumbudur last May 21.

Responding to the report, which was presented in Parliament Dec. 23, the Home Ministry said it was 'difficult to share the perception of the commission on the lapses attributed to the central government and the IB'.

The ministry is not involved in the day-to-day administration, of which VIP security forms a part. At the time of the assassination, Tamil Nadu was under direct federal rule.

Security arrangements were adequate, the ministry insisted, and the assassination took place because of faulty implementation by the police at the meeting.

Regarding the IB's role, the ministry maintained that intelligence concerning Gandhi's security was not withheld from the state government or the local police.

'This lapse, therefore, is not borne out by facts,' it declared.

It quoted an IB memo of May 20 as having said that the state police had constant instructions from the IB about the security threat to Gandhi, and had alerted its own forces.

Serious Threats

'Threats to VIPs from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam continued to remain quite serious,' the memo added. 'These militants are adept at the use of improvised explosive devices, and special note will have to be taken to guard VIPs from these threats.'

Earlier, on Jan. 23, 1991, the memo said, the IB reported that the LTTE 'had threatened to cause harm to Gandhi, alleging that he, along with certain other leaders, were stumbling blocks to the achievements of the eelam (independent state).'

In a memo dated April 4, 1991, according to the ministry, the IB said the crackdown in Tamil Nadu after the imposition of President's rule had increased the resentment of the LTTE and their local supporters against the central government, which enhanced the threat to Gandhi. The memo asked that the state police make adequate security arrangements during his visit.

Three days before the assassination the ministry said, the IB sent a message that Gandhi's life was in danger 'during his public meeting or other public appearances before and after the elections.'

It quoted a message from a senior state police official as saying that Gandhi faced a very serious threat, and asked top police officials to insure that a hospital was prepared to meet any emergency requirements.

Need for Crowd Control

'No unidentified persons should be allowed in the vicinity of the dignitary,' it emphasized, while also citing

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The Orphans of War

by T.S. Tissanayagam

The harrowing, tragic experiences of over a decade which has become the everyday life of the people living in the North of Sri Lanka has its unsung heroes. We all know about the Tamil politicians and guerrillas. But there are the Cromwells guiltless of their country's blood, whose self sacrifice and grit would bring a thrill of admiration to anybody who meets and speaks to them.

Shanthi was in Colombo a few weeks ago to attend a conference on family rehabilitation and child welfare. Only in her late twenties, she exudes an air of confidence when speaking about a matter that has increasingly become one of urgent concern to those living in the war-torn areas – children. And her qualifications for this, are that in the past five years she has run two orphanages. One in the Wanni and another in Jaffna.

'The problem is that life there is so difficult and an orphan who gets a raw deal at the best of times, now gets the worst of it', she said. Somewhere in 1987 when the IPKF had just moved into Jafna, Shanthi had been asked to take over an orphanage in the Wanni which had been established by as retired school principal and his wife. But Shanthi says that she had not seen them since both had been killed when they were caught in a crossfire in the thick of a military operation. This had rendered the orphanage without a head.

At this moment of calamity Shanthi had been requested to take over the orphanage and run it by seeing to its day to day affairs and expenditure. However after settling in she discovered that while she was the formal head of the instituion there was a much more powerful if shadowy body, which actually controlled matters at the orphanage. This was the Committee.

'They were all teachers', she said speaking about the Committee in the way one spoke of the Party in a Solzinitsyn novel, 'and they were a corrupt, self-seeking set of people'. The Committee was made up of teachers because the founder of the orphanage was a teacher himself. But when he passed away the Committee thought that they were the rightful heirs to whatever was there in the orphanage and could virtually consider it their property and exploit it at will.

The main income for the orphanage was derived from about fifty acres of land which was partly under paddy while the rest was confined to a thriving home garden of vegetable and fruit. In addition to this a bakery and printing press provided both revenue and vocational training for the children of the orphanage.

'A couple of days after I had taken over I was surprised to see members of the Committee taking away the produce with impunity'.

She watched these developments and felt uneasy. The more she chose to ignore what was going on, the more brazen became the plunderers.

She had authority to run the day to day activities of the orphanage. But for this she needed money, which came primarily from selling the produce. And a significant portion of the produce now went in to fattening private purses.

The nominal head of the Committee was not living near the orphanage. She described him as a man who was well meaning and honest but ineffective. One day he had called her to his office and perhaps too embarrassed to broach the subject had sat across a table without speaking. But she had finally summoned up courage and blurted out about the misdeeds at the orphanage. She had admitted that she was inexperienced in keeping accounts and with the naked robbery going on there she would eventually be blamed of embezzlement.

By the time she had left his office he had shown her to basically maintain accounts properly and had emphasised its importance in a place run by crooks.

The showdown came a few weeks later. The children in the orphanage had seen one of the Committee's members cutting a branch of plantains from the extensive home garden at the orphanage. Shanthi thought that the time to take matters to a head had come. She went up to the man and told him that this was the produce of the orphanage which was to be sold for the upkeep of the institution. She told him that if he was taking it, to at least make an entry in the book which would be reflected in the accounts.

'That evening the bunch of plantains was placed near the door of my office' she said, 'the implication being that I wanted them for myself'. The tussle for dominance between her and the Committee continued. And into that equation came another factor. Some of the older students at the orphanage tended to stay on in the institution by virtue of the fact that they had been inmates. They expected the younger children to wait on them and had a 'fag' system operating at the orphanage. This included washing clothes and serving meals.

The iniquitous system struck a strong chord of disapproval in Shanthi. She protested vehemently against it. This aggravated further the discord in the home where the Committee and the senior students came together through a mutuality of interests. One day while she was in the dormitory of the orphanage, she heard one of the 'senior' students tell another, 'The EPRLF was looking out for one Shanthi from Vadukoddai'.

That was the time when the EPRLF was ruling the roost in the north under the IPKF. And the implication of their looking for me was a concealed threat. I went and told the students that I was the only Shanthi from Vadukoddai and anybody was free to check on my activities'. But nothing had happened.

She was disillusioned.

One day she went home to Vadukoddai and never returned. Members of the Committee had visited her home in the hope of persuading her to change her mind. But she had remained steadfast to the decision of keeping away from the Wanni orphanage and its sordid affairs. 'But about July 1990, another offer was made to run a Hindu Children's Home in the peninsula', she said.

At this orphanage too she found problems awaiting her. Though the place was different, the nature of the problems were the same. The Committee of this orphanage consisted of 13 people. The brother-in-law of the man running the place regularly came to supervise its activities.

Shanthi found that on the pretext of keeping an account of the provisions procured for the orphanage he and his friends tried to pilfer some of the stuff.

But a more serious problem arose. Adjoining the Hindu Children's Home was an orphanage run by a religious NGO. There were few children at that home and the place was notorious for the ill-treatment of its inmates.

On one occasion, discovering that their counterparts at the Hindu Children's Home were better looked after, the children at the other home sought refuge in Shanthi's orphanage. Shanthi says that the children had been hiding there without her knowledge.

However the people running the other home finding their charges missing had accused Shanthi of inciting the children to escape. The children

had returned to their orphanage and were beaten for their presumption to run away. Shanthi, hearing this had written to various people, including the LTTE's office. But that had been of no avail. The forces which had been conspiring against her, the members of the Committee and the NGO persuaded the LTTE to take their side. And the LTTE area leader himself had taken a hand in seeing that she left.

When she had left one of the orphanage's inmates a boy of twelve had wanted to come with her. Since she had returned home to Vadukoddai, he had opted to stay with her. But that was the time when the airforce was bombing in and around Vadukoddai. In the process there was a feeling that even houses could get hit. Shanthi's mother was sceptical of the wisdom of keeping the young child at home.

'So I had to take him to the SOLT office which is run by the LTTE to deal with the problems of students', she said.

The SOLT office (Students Organisation of Liberation Tigers) could not deal with the problem and referred her to the LTTE area office. The Tigers advised her to keep the child. But her mother's fear of taking responsibility for the orphan made Shanthi ask them to make alternative arrangements for the child's accommodation. The LTTE finally suggested that she leave the boy with them.

'I felt terrible. Would we leave our own children with them?' she asked with a touch of sanctimony.

However she said that the boy, as far as she knows, had not been sent for weapon training or eventually to the front. She had heard that he was being sent to school when she had inquired about him last. But the problem was that when he was not at school he was in the camp.

'What is not likeable is that children are raised in an atmosphere of violence. They see guns all around them and are naturally interested in trying them out'.

Recently Shanthi had an interesting experience which had taken her on a trip into the past. One day, while she was at home, an armed woman guerrilla in combat fatigues had walked in. She had been a student at the Wanni orphanage. She along with seventeen other girls from the orphanage had joined the movement.

To Shanthi the fact that the girl and her mates had joined the movement was a testimony of the poor standards and a lack of care at the Wanni orphanage. If it had been an individual joining up it could have been attributed to personal preferences. But a batch of 18 was too large a number to attribute to individual idiosyncracies.

The War has begotten destitutes and orphans. And as it continues with unabated fury while a virtual economic blockade is in force the plight of the child in the war torn areas has become tragic.

But worse, even while orphans face hazards of the war – bombing and the lack of food and medicine – there are some out to plunder and exploit the weak and the defenceless in the north.

A Woman Alone on the Road

It's a risk and a bother
in this world that's still male
when around each bend may lie
ambushes of absurd encounters
and the streets fix her
with cold stares.
This woman alone on the road,
Her only defence
is her defencelessness.

She hasn't made from any man
a crutch, or wayside shelter.
She never walked over a man
as if he were a bridge.
She went off alone
to meet him as an equal
and to love him truly.

Whether she'll go far
or falter in the mud
or be blinded by horizons
she doesn't know. She's stubborn.
Even if rebuked along the way
her setting out itself
is accomplishment enough.
A woman alone on the road.
And yet she goes on
and does not stop.

No man can be as lonesome
as a woman on her own.
Before her the darkness
drops down a locked door.
A woman alone on the road
ought not go out at night.
The dawn sun, like a turnkey,
will unlock her horizons.

Still she goes on
even in darkness
not glancing about in fear
but each step measuring her faith
in the Dark Man
with whom she's been threatened
for a long time.
Her steps echo on the paving
and stub against a stone.
A woman alone on the road:
quiet brave steps over a sad earth,
an earth which, against the stars,
is a woman alone on the road.

Blaga Dimitrova.

Translated by John Balaban. Reprinted from *Poets of Bulgaria* edited by William Meredith (*Forest Books, London,* **£6.95**).

Continued from page 23

the possibility of Congress Party workers gathering in large numbers and the need for adequate security to control crowds.

'A manual, visual anti-sabotage check of the place should be carried out by using sniffer dogs to insure adequate protective arrangements and by using sterile zone and adequate barricading, including lighting arrangements behind the stage,' it said. 'Garlands and bouquets may be checked before they are presented to the VIP.'

The commission's report criticized the behaviour of local Congress leaders, including the Lok Sabha candidate from Sriperumbudur, Maragatham Chandrasekhar, who showed a 'total lack of awareness of their obligation to cooperate with the police and facilitate them in their task of providing security to Gandhi.'

It said their attitude had created security problems, because the party workers did not show 'the kind of discipline and behaviour which it was reasonable to expect from them in the interest of security of their party president, when the high threat to him was known generally to everyone.'

Local party officials, including Chandrasekhar, were only concerned in getting the largest possible gathering, using Gandhi's charisma to improve their election prospects, it charged.

Continued from page 15

be on guard, and beware of pseudo peace proposals, whatever be the desperation for peace. There are many Tamils, including politicians, lined up in the South, who are prepared to play the role of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, to befuddle the Tamils with enchanting songs of trust and goodwill, and lead them into the abyss. There is no easy path to freedom and liberty. It would be well for the Tamils to note the words of a great American – Benjamin Franklin 'They who would give up essential liberty for a little peace, deserve neither liberty nor peace'. It is possible 'to win the war but lose the peace', unless there is courage, endurance and wisdom to the end.

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MATRIMONIAL

Hindu Tamil mother *seeks from Sri Lanka or elsewhere slim, fair, Tamil professional partner in the 30s for engineer son, 42, Australian citizen in professional employment. Send photo, details. M 633 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu parents *seek suitable partner for son, 27, tall, handsome, high salary, electronic development engineer in States. Religious, sober habits. M 634 c/o Tamil Times.*

System Analyst British graduate *seeks educated bride. Willing immigrate. Telephone 031 445 2428 or 0382 642076 (UK).*

Father *seeks groom over 37 for Montessori qualified daughter in Colombo. Telephone 081 691 4725 (UK) for more details.*

Jaffna Hindu parents *seek sincere attractive partner for their tall handsome professionally qualified son 32, green card holder, residing in America. Please send details, photo and horoscope. M 637 c/o Tamil Times.*

Brother *seeks suitable partner, professionally qualified, between 35 and 38 years, for his sister professionally qualified (Canadian citizen), Mars afflicted. Please send details. M 638 c/o Tamil Times.*

Mixed parents *(Tamil, Sinhala) seek partner for doctor daughter, 27, fair, slim, 5'6" working in the States. M 639 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu *seeks professionally qualified groom for 31-year-old attractive, accountant daughter, horoscope immaterial. Box 8714, Northridge, California 91327, USA.*

Brother *seeks suitable partner between 35 and 38, professionally qualified, for his sister, professionally qualified, (Canadian Citizen), Mars afflicted. Please send details. M 640 c/o Tamil Times.*

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couples on their recent wedding.

Dr. Maheswaran *son of Dr. & Mrs. S. Satkurunathan of 48 Eton Avenue, New Malden, Surrey and* **Geetha** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs A.T.S. Ratnasingham of 178 Queens Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 on 28.11.92 at Ganapathy Temple, Wimbledon, UK.*

Karunanandan *son of late Mr. & Mrs. S.P. Velauthapillai of 'Karuna Giri', Champion Lane, Kokuvil and* **Sajitha** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. A. Pathmanathan of 'Kanthan Arul', Nanthavil, Kokuvil on 7.12.92 at Ganapathy Temple, Wimbledon, UK.*

Nanny Wanted

Nanny wanted by two doctors, March 1993 in London NW10. Tel: 081-459 3651.

60th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr. & Mrs. C. Rajasingham *of 22 Elder Close, Guildford, U.K., celebrated the 60th Anniversary of their Wedding on 24.10.92. Mr. Rajasingham was a Divisional Road Transport officer in Sri Lanka.*

OBITUARIES

Vyramuthu Tharmalingam *(84), of Urelu East Chunnakam; beloved husband of Ranimayagam (Retired headteacher of Urelu Ganesha Vidyasalai), loving father of Linganayagam (London), Tharmathurai, Tharmachandran, Tharmakunalosana (Colombo), Tharmasekaram (Australia), Tharmakunapooshana (Badulla), Tharmajeyasooriar, Tharmakunavathana (Germany), Tharmakunabhavani; father-in-law of Vimaladevi (London), Mangaleswary, Sornalakshmi, Sinnathamby (Colombo), Gnaneswary (Australia), Arulanantham (Badulla), Roginithevi, Shanmugarajah (Germany), Sivabalasundaram brother of Mrs. Thangaratnam Thambithurai, Mrs. Saraswathy Kandiah, Mrs. Lakshmi Vinasithamby and Mrs. Sellamuthu Kathirgamathamby passed away after a brief illness on 23.11.92. He is very much missed by his loved ones and his relatives and friends who are mourning and praying for his soul to rest in peace. – V.T. Linganayagam, 4 Acacia Road, Bedford, MK42 0HS. Tel. 0234 215932.*

Somasundaram George Devadason *beloved husband of Ruby much loved father and father-in-law of Indrani and Karunai Jeevaratnam, Premini and Jega Tissainayagam, Suvendrini and Ranjan Richards and a much treasured grandfather died peacefully in New Zealand on 28.11.92. – 143 Morgans Road, Timaru, New Zealand.*

Namasivayam Sabaratnam, *Principal Emeritus, Jaffna Hindu College; former Vice Principal, Karainagar Hindu College; former Editor, Eelanadu; beloved husband of Leela; father of Sivambikai (U.K.), Dr. Sivakumaran (Jaffna Hospital), Vamadevan (Hatton National Bank, Colombo), Somanathan (Australia), Rajakumari (National Development Bank, Colombo); father-in-law of Dr. Jegadason (U.K.), Jeganayaki (Jaffna), Dr. Buvaneswari (Colombo), Dr. Kalaivani (Australia) expired in Jaffna on 22.11.92. Funeral took place in Jaffna on 23.11.92 – 32 Rutland Road, Retford, Notts. Tel: 0777 708727.*

An Appreciation

A Gem, rare and resplendent – that in short sums up the intrinsic worth of **Namasivayam Sabaratnam,** *Emeritus Principal of Jaffna Hindu College. With his exit, Jaffna has been deprived of a leading educationist who held sway among his peers for well over three decades as a Teacher, Trade-unionist, School Head and Journalist of a very high order. No religious, cultural or educational event was considered a success without Mr. Sabaratnam gracing it as one of its important conveners or speakers!*

As Principal of Jaffna Hindu College, he was perhaps its last incumbent who laboured in earnest to fulfil the dreams and aspirations of her Founding Fathers. When the history of this premier Hindu Institution comes to be written 'The Sabaratnam Era' would form a distinct chapter in its growth.

Soon after his retirement, Mr. Sabaratnam was invited by the Management of 'The Eela Nadu' a popular, provincial Tamil Daily, to take on the mantle of its Chief Editorship during the critical stage of its development. His guidance and direction coupled with his seasoned and reasoned editorials earned him the encomiums of all its intelligent and discriminating readers.

In short, Mr. Sabaratnam shone like the proverbial morning star and set high standards in the teaching profession in all its facets launching a legion of students in quest of the intellectual golden fleece, so much so, many of them are now at the helm of affairs in various walks of life. Incidentally, this includes one of his own sons Dr. Sivakumaran, a chip off the old block who as Consultant Physician of the Jaffna Teaching Hospital is blazing a new trail working with singular devotion and rare distinction and continues the Saga of his

illustrious father in another sphere in healing the sick.

Mr. Sabaratnam will continue to live in his handiwork and his honest labours would inspire many. The good and the noble never die! They continue to smell sweet and blossom in the dust.

We join all and specially his wife and children in praying for the repose of his soul at the foot of the maker.

V.T. Singalam.

Jaffna, 7.12.92.

Ruby Santhiramalar Navaratnasingam – A Tribute

Ruby Santhiramalar Navaratnasingam – Former Vice-Principal, Vembadi Girls' High School, Jaffna – Called to Eternal Rest on 9 November, 1992.

A Tribute paid at The Requiem held at St. Alban The Martyr, Treboeth, Swansea on 14.11.92.

It is a sad day for all of us, especially to the members of her family; it is indeed a sad day for me, for Ruby had been a real sister to me too.

As I recall, I saw her for the first time when I was an under-graduate at the University of Ceylon in 1952; she was a post-graduate student then reading for the Diploma in Education. I must say that I was rather struck by her gait and gaiety, and her distinctive personality. Later on I had occasion to meet her at St. John's College, Jaffna in 1956 when the late Kalai Arasu Chornalingam, the doyen of Tamil Drama in Ceylon, produced the much acclaimed play by Sambanda Mudaliyar – 'Demon Land'. I recall that Ruby was always an example to the rest of the cast, always prompt and punctual, devoted and disciplined.

She had her education at Chundikuli Girls' College, the Jaffna Convent and at Jaffna College. The late Mr. Handy-Perinpanayagam often referred to her keenness and devotion to duty while she was at Jaffna College, where she was also President of the SCM. An outstanding badminton player she went on to win the much coveted University Championship.

She had a long and distinguished career as a graduate teacher and later Vice Principal at Vembadi Girls' High School during which time she obtained not only the post-graduate Diploma in Education at the University of Ceylon, but also the Masters Degree in Education at the University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A. She taught for a year in England before returning to Vembadi, where she earned a reputation as an able administrator and an enthusiastic supporter cum patron of extra-curricular activities such as sports and dramatics, the SCM and the YWCA, and especially the Girl Guides Association of which she was District Commissioner for a time. Opting for early retirement in 1972, she proceeded to Zambia where she had another long spell of teaching.

Ruby's three outstanding qualities were her dedication to her many duties, her organisational skills and her absolute faith in Jesus Christ as her Lord and Saviour.

She was like the wick of the lamp. When the wick is aflame at its tip the lamp gives out light, but when the wick is extinguished there is darkness.

It is not surprising, therefore, that when Mahatma Gandhi died, Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru described the tragedy aptly – 'The light has gone out, and there is darkness'. Yet Jesus showed how the same darkness could be changed into light, which was grasped by great minds like Albert Schweitzer, Ram Mohan Roy, Mahatma Gandhi, and religious leaders like Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. May her soul rest in peace.

Dr. K. Paramothayan.

Mrs. Thangaratnam Thangarajah – An Appreciation

Mrs Thangaratnam Thangarajah, who died on 2nd October 1992, belonged to a generation of Tamil women educationalists who made a rich contribution to the community both through their work in the schools and through their larger social concerns.

She was a pioneer in some ways. She became a graduate at a time when university education was still regarded as a male preserve, and she went on to build a professional career at a time when, families like hers, would have preferred their daughters settling early to a more conventional role.

She taught first at two of Jaffna's leading girls' schools – Uduvil and Ramanathan. She later joined the state educational service and was principal of R.K.M. Girls' School, Batticaloa, Shanmuga Vidyalayam, Trincomalee and Navaly Maha Vidyalayam from where she retired in 1972. The work she did in these schools and her involvement in the activities of social and religious organisations brought great respect and considerable standing in the community. Some of these schools drew a fair proportion of their students from underprivileged catchments and she owed much of her standing to the concern and sense of justice with which she worked for their welfare.

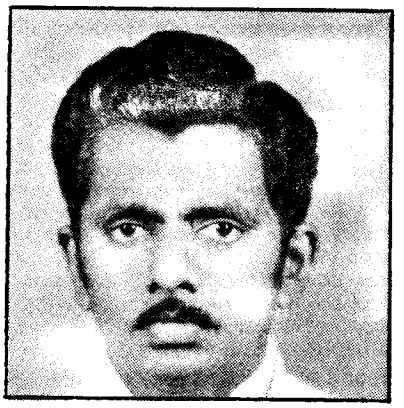
Her work in the schools and her wider interests made her life a very busy one but they did not affect the devotion and energy which she brought to bear on her responsibilities as a wife and a mother. She and her husband (who died in 1987) worked unsparingly to provide the best opportunities for their three children. Because of her background and special experience, she had an important part to play in guiding the children in their education and career choices – something in which she received strong support from her husband, who trusted her judgement completely. The successful careers her children have now made, owe much to what she did then.

In the last six years she lived in London, active and useful as ever, spreading a benevolent influence over her grandchildren and having a growing choice of friends – young and old – who were drawn to her because she embodied in herself the values and graces of an earlier time.

J.H. Ariyaratnan.

Mrs. Sivasambu Kamalachi, daughter of the late Pandit Kanapathippillai and Mrs. Kanapathippillai of Alvai; beloved wife of S. Sivasambu (Retired teacher); beloved mother of Bavananthan (Ex-Teacher, Ethiopia), Saravanabavananthan (Canada, Ex-Teacher, Nigeria), Karunanandan (Switzerland, Ex-Post & Telecommunication, Colombo), Arumugananthan (MPCS, Udupiddy), Kuhendran (Canada, formerly in Nigeria), Anandasundaram (London, formerly Management Aids Ltd., Colombo) and Mrs. Yogeswary Rasathurai; beloved mother-in-law of Rasathurai (Aiyer & Co), Manonmanydevi, Soundranayaki (Teacher, Vembadi), Lingarani, Bala Parameshwari, Sarasa Mala and Anasooyathevy; beloved grandmother of Rajeswaran, Shanmugananthan (both of University of London), Kamaleswaran, Sivaramanan, Sivarajah, Subathira, Tharshayani, Thayani, Senthooran, Abirami, Abarna, Branavan and Aravinth expired on 6.1.93 and funeral took place on 7.1.93 at Atchuvely South, Atchuvely, Sri Lanka – S. Anandasundaram, 44A Deal Road, London SW17 9JW Tel: 081-682 2872.

IN MEMORIAM



In ever loving memory of the late **Navalar Kanapathipillai Navasothy** who passed away in London on 4.01.90.

Each year that passes increases our feeling of loss for the qualities which few possess,

Continued on page 28

Continued from page 27

though many covet. The ease with which you won the hearts of the Tamils of the World, lay in your oratory, your broadcasting and your selfless service in the cause of Tamil speaking people irrespective of their country of origin, creed or political persuasions. Above all, the burden of sorrow rests heavier with time on those who were dear and near to you and have to live with the thought that fate has so cruelly cut short a life which had still so much promise left in it.

Fondly remembered on the third anniversary of his death by his dear wife, son and daughters, mother, brothers and sister, family and friends.

In Treasured Memory of
S. Shanmugasundaram
A.G.A.
Born: 17.01.1926
Died: 09.02.1985

Lovingly remembered. Deeply missed. Fondly remembered by Wife, Daughter and Family and all loved ones.

In everloving memory of **Dr. T. Thambyapillai** *(Research Fellow, Imperial College, London) who passed away on December 4, 1984.*

Even as the years roll by,
The silent tears will always flow,
Your memory will never die,
We feel your absence more and more.
It seems like only yesterday
That you were here. We still miss you
We are reminded in many ways,
Of you. Can we forget so soon
One so caring and so Kind?
Time passes ever so fast,
But you fill our hearts and minds –
Your memory will always last.

So sadly missed and dearly loved by his wife and children Meenalosani, Sivakamasunthari and Shiyamalanayagi.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

January 30 *6.30pm Medica Institute of Tamils (South East & Kent) presents Izai Vizha of Bharatha Natyam, Instrumental Music and Vocal Recital at Kelsey Park School Hall, Manor Way, Beckenham, Kent. Tel: 081-857 7100/851 1262/300 8590.*

Jan. 30 *6.30pm Dinner & Entertainment in aid of 'Anbu Illam', Trincomalee; Home for Orphans and Destitutes at Lola Jones Hall, Tooting Leisure Centre, Garratt Lane, London SW17. Tel: 081-693 4088.*

February 3 *Ekathasi.*

Feb. 4 *Prathosam; St Agatha's Day.*

Feb. 6 *Thai Poosam; Full Moon.*

Feb. 7 *7.00pm Mirudangam Recital by Brahma Shri Karaikudi Mani at Riverdale Hall, The Lewisham Centre, Rennel Street, London SE13. Tel: 081-776 7724.*

Feb. 11 *Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.*

Feb. 18. *Prathosam.*

Feb. 19 *Maha Sivaratthiri.*

Feb. 21 *Ammavasai.*

Feb. 22 *St. Peter's Day.*

Feb. 24 *Ash Wednesday.*

Feb. 25. *Chathurthi.*

Feb. 28. *First Sunday in Lent.*

At the Bhavan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 071 381 3086/4608.

Feb. 7 *12.30pm* **Munshi,** *a documentary film. All welcome.*

Feb. 14 *6.30pm Hindustani Vocal by Begum Perveen Sultana Dishad Khan.*

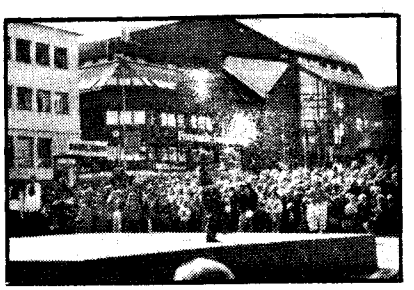
Feb. 19 *6.30pm Maha Sivaratthiri – Pujah, Bajans and Prasatham. All welcome.*

Feb. 21 *6.30pm Carnatic Vocal by Sivasakthi Sivanesan.*

Feb. 27 *'The Face' a dance production choreographed and performed by Mr. Prakash Yadagudde.*

Brent Asian Academy – Annual Celebrations

The Brent Asian Academy celebrated their first anniversary with a prize giving, dinner and dance on 12th December 1992 at Alperton High School Annexe, Wembley, Middx., attended by over 300 parents and students. The Academy specialises in the teaching of English, Tamil, Science, Technology, Indian Arts and Sports. It is noteworthy that the Academy were the champions at the Thamil Osai Sports Meet held in Willesden Stadium recently. For more particulars please contact the Chairperson Mrs. Nalayini Kuganathan, 153 Sudbury Heights Ave., Greenford, Middx. Tel: 081-902 9203.



Bharathanatyam Recital Delights King of Norway

Miss Gowsalya Fernando, a Tamil refugee from Mutur, Sri Lanka performed a Bharatha-Natyam recital before King Harald when he visited Tromso, while touring the country after his appointment after the death of his father King Olav. Gowsalya participated in the special program arranged by the Municipality of Tromso to emphasize the multi-cultural aspect of Tromso.

Carnatic Music Classes in Norway

Tamil Development Network of Norway has secured funds from the Norwegian Ministry of Culture to procure carnatic music instruments to conduct classes in carnatic music for Tamils and Norwegians. Those who can assist in procuring these instruments are requested to contact Mr. K. Sivarajah, Tamil Development Network of Norway, Sondre, Tollbugt 2, 9008 Tromso, Norway. Tel: 01047838918 (Home), 010478382130 (Office).

Anbu Illam in Trincomalee

Anbu Illam is a home for Orphans and destitutes at 167 Central Road, Trincomalee. It houses 110 children (89 girls and 21 boys) who have lost one or other or both parents. The spacious building gifted by a philanthropist has a leaking roof and a part of it is about to collapse – the children get wet and have insufficient room to sleep. The cost of repairing the roof is estimated at £5000. A group of wellwishers led by Mr. A. Mahendra of 10 Towley Road, Dulwich, London SE22 8SW. Tel: 081-693 4088 is organising a dinner and entertainment at Lola Jones Hall, Tooting, London SW17 on 30.1.93 to raise funds to help the project.

Vishnuarpanam in Bharathanatyam

On 10th October, a very large and enthusiastic audience was treated to a feast of Bharathanatyam by over 75 pupils of Srimathi Subadra Sivadasan, Directress of Nupra Kendra School of Dancing, at the Ashcroft Theatre, Park Lane, Croydon.

It was apparent that the Guru had inspired her pupils to creative self forgetting performances. She achieved this through puranic based portrayals of the dance dramas 'Ganga Samrakshanam', 'Panjali Sabatham', 'Meenachi Kalyanam' and other Bharathanatyam items Alarippu, Subrapatham, Sri Krishna Kauthavam in addition to folk dances.

Children ranging from the age of six to sixteen brought to the stage an excellent expression of their talents harnessed and

QUIZ CROSSWORDS – No. 23. Compiled by: Richards

Closing date for completed grid and coupon to be received is 28 February 1993.

Answers and the name of the winner – first all correct entry pulled out of a bag – will be announced in the March 1993 issue.

The winner will receive a prize of £10.00 sterling.

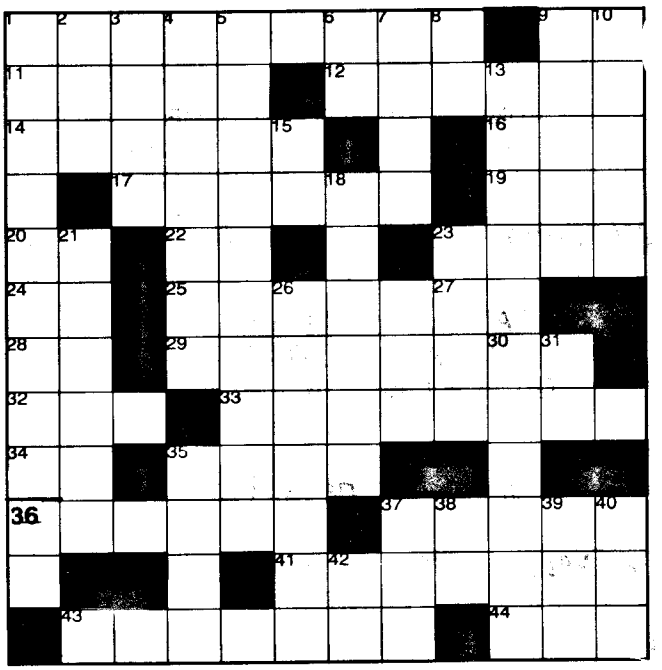
All entries should be sent to: Tamil Times, P.O. Box 121, Sutton, Surrey SM1 3TD, UK.

Across.

1. Widely celebrated Christian festival (9)
9. Pronoun used in collective reference (2)
11. Papa Doc and Baby Doc poverty-stricken state (5)
12. A place of hives and bees (6)
14. Higher part of a country (6)
16. Always the busy one – how delicious! (3)
17. Chooses (6)
19. Balance briefly (3)
20. An elaborate event (2)
22. Ratio of a person's mental ability to the normal (2)
23. Ontario is one, Kandy is another and Baikal too (4)
24. Not out (2)
25. Month named after a Roman emperor of Jesus' time (6)
28. The spirit that survives death (2)
29. Relates a story or speaks of an event (8)
32. A grunt or an expression of disgust (3)
33. A feeling of disgust (8)
34 – Carre, the author of The Spy Who Came in from the Cold (2)
35. Usually refers to the Oxbridge tutors or fellows (4)
36. Here and there or on every side (6)
37. Was in poor health for some time (5)
41. A strange star on this sky hailed the birth of Christ (7)
43. Shot gun slugs (7)
44. Sri Lanka's famed beverage (3)

Down:

1. North Sri Lanka's paradise for migrant birds (11)
2. A chance occurrence (3)
3. Irritate (4)
4. Southern European (7)
5. An indispensable condition or qualification (4,3,3)
6. Mother, affectionately (2)
7. Mimics (4)
8. JDC–, Jaffna Diocese of the Church of – (2)
9. Inflict harm on an enemy (5)
10. Hole for passing through a rope or cord (6)
13. Famed Swedish Group (4)
15. Short direct current (2)
18. Bull, the second sign of the Zodiac (6)
21. Wild ass (6)
23. Asia's most feared guerrilla organisation (4)
26. Spanish nobleman (7)
27. Crack force often sent on dangerous missions (3)
30. Young eagle (6)
31. Short saint (2)
35. Twofold (4)
37. A stupid person (3)
38. Briefly, Italian Vermouth (2)
39. Poetically before (3)
40. A major constituent of chromosomes (3)
42. Laotian monetary unit (2)



Quiz Crosswords – 21: Solutions.

Across: 1. Brinkmanship. 12. Andaman. 13. Oath. 14. Naos. 15. Gandhi. 17. Lapped. 20. AL. 21. AP. 23. Held. 24. Sci. 25. Rift. 28. Rs. 29. Reap. 30. Aquino. 32. Sac. 33. Nun. 34. Anew. 36. Rmi. 38. Aedes. 41. Aegean. 41. Id. 42. Vt. 43. CD. 44. The. 45. Seychelles. 48. Ebon. 49. Nay.

Down: 1. Bandaranaike. 2. RNA. 3. Idol. 4. NASA. 5. Km. 6. Ma. 7. Angels. 8. Son. 9. Had. 10. Ithaca. 11. Philippines. 16. Add. 18. PH. 19. Peron. 22. Piqued. 24. Secretly. 26. Fund. 27. Ti. 29. Ra. 31. Nasty. 32. Sweden. 35. Each. 37. Mahe. 39. Even. 45. So. 46. Ca. 47. La.

Winner: Mr. V.G. Sangarapillai, 54 Egremont Drive, Lower Earley, Reading RG6 3BS.

moulded into 'artistes' by their guru and the supporting musicians through intensive training. The children, in the words of the Guru appearing in her message in the brochure 'were full of expectation about their fulfilment' and they achieved it in full measure.

The compere Sri Wimal Sockanathan did well to explain the story of the dance dramas and the music setting in which the dances were performed. The Nattuvangam of Srimathi Subadra Sivadasan, the melodious singing of Srimathi Priyadharshana Yogarajah and Selvi Anushya Sabaratnam as well as the deep sonorous voice of Sri Somasundra Desiger, the mirudangist Sri Paramasamy Kirupakaran, the violinist Sri B.K. Chadrasekar, Srimathi Jeganathan on the Veena, Sri Dayaparan the flutist and Sri Sithamparanathan in Ganjeera all combined to produce an enthralling effect.

The show was in aid of the Sri Vishnu Temple in Dehiwala, Sri Lanka, a worthy cause which richly benefited from the performance.

Continued from page 19

Madras. They all performed well and whenever Premalatha Sarma appeared the overall quality of the programme seemed to be raised a notch higher – her portrayal of the agony of Appar in Kootrayinavaru, although a trifle overdone at times, was received by the audience with great acclaim and respect.

By choosing songs such as Ulahelam... and Murugane Senthil... which are (or should be!) recited daily by children at home, the producers made sure that even the younger children were kept involved. The hallowed Temples of Srilanka Thiruketheeswaram and Thirukoneswaram also featured in the selection.

It is nevertheless a matter of great pity that programmes such as these do not as yet draw larger audiences. The West London Tamil School and the artistes, notably Mrs. Parenthaman have our congratulations and whole-hearted support.

Dr. K. Sivakumar.

Continued from page 16

committed Sinhala Buddhists, their children are sent only to Royal or St. Thomas, or at least, St. Joseph's or Trinity.

Such being the pathetic situation of the Sinhala people, what further harm can a federal set-up in the country do to them?

Before fathering all their woes on the heads of the Tamil people, why not the Sinhalese put their own house in order? A little less hypocrisy, a little less opportunism and a little less superficiality might help in winning the confidence of the minorities.

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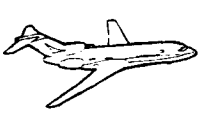

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